

Women Writing Back /
Writing Women Back

Intersections

Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture

General Editor

Karl A.E. Enenkel

Chair of Medieval and Neo-Latin Literature
Westfälische Wilhelmsuniversität Münster
e-mail: kenen_01@uni_muenster.de

Editorial Board

W. van Anrooij (University of Leiden)
W. de Boer (Miami University)
K.A.E. Enenkel (University of Münster)
R.L. Falkenburg (New York University)
J.L. de Jong (University of Groningen)
E.E.P. Kolfin (University of Amsterdam)
W. Melion (Emory University)
K. Murphy (University of Oxford)
W. Neuber (Free University of Berlin)
H. Roodenburg (P.J. Meertens Institute)
P.J. Smith (University of Leiden)
R.K. Todd (University of Leiden)
C. Zittel (Max Planck Institut, Florence)

Advisory Board

K. VAN BERKEL (University of Groningen) – F. EGMOND
A. GRAFTON (Princeton University) – A. HAMILTON (Warburg Institute)
C.L. HEESAKKERS – H.A. HENDRIX (Utrecht University) – F.J. VAN INGEN
J.I. ISRAEL (Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, N.J.) – M. JACOBS (Free University of Brussels)
K.A. OTTENHEYM (Utrecht University) – K. PORTEMAN
E.J. SLUIJTER (University of Amsterdam)

VOLUME 16 – 2010

Women Writing Back / Writing Women Back

Transnational Perspectives from
the Late Middle Ages to the Dawn of
the Modern Era

Edited by

Anke Gilleir
Alicia C. Montoya
Suzan van Dijk



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2010

Illustration on the cover: Nic. Verkolje, *Katharina Lescaije* (1693), pencil in grey on black chalk, 23,6 × 16,3 cm. Teylers Museum Haarlem, Inv. nr. PP 780.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Women writing back/writing women back : transnational perspectives from the late Middle Ages to the dawn of the modern era / edited by Anke Gilleir, Alicia C. Montoya, Suzan van Dijk.

p. cm. — (Intersections : interdisciplinary studies in early modern culture, 16)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-18463-3 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. European literature—Women authors—History and criticism. 2. Literature, Medieval—History and criticism. 3. European literature—Renaissance, 1450–1600—History and criticism. 4. European literature—17th century—History and criticism. 5. European literature—18th century—History and criticism. 6. Women and literature—Europe—History. I. Gilleir, Anke. II. Montoya, Alicia. III. Dijk, Suzanna van. IV. Title. V. Series.

PN721.W66 2010

809'.89287094—dc22

2010006228

ISSN 1568-1811

ISBN 978 90 04 18463 3

Copyright 2010 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Hotei Publishing, IDC Publishers, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.

Fees are subject to change.

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

CONTENTS

Notes on the Editors	ix
Notes on the Contributors	xi
List of Illustrations	xv

Introduction: Toward a New Conception of Women's Literary History	1
ANKE GILLEIR AND ALICIA C. MONTOYA	

FEMALE SPACES, FEMALE COMMUNITIES

'To Promote God's Praise and her Neighbour's Salvation'. Strategies of Authorship and Readership among Mystic Women in the Later Middle Ages	23
MADELEINE JEAY AND KATHLEEN GARAY	

Gendering Place: The Role of Place in Anne Krabbe's Ballad Works	51
ANNE-MARIE MAI	

'To Make Frequent Assemblies, Associations, and Combinations amongst our Sex'. Nascent Ideas of Female Bonding in Seventeenth-Century England	73
INA SCHABERT	

Women and Literary Sociability in Eighteenth-Century Lisbon	93
VANDA ANASTÁCIO	

APPROPRIATING LITERARY GENRE

Female Writing and the Use of Literary Byways. Pastoral Drama by Maddalena Campiglia (1553–1595)	115
PHILIEP BOSSIER	
Prescriptions for Women: Alchemy, Medicine and the Renaissance <i>Querelle des Femmes</i>	135
MEREDITH K. RAY	
The Appropriation of the Genre of Nuptial Poetry by Katharina Lescailje (1649–1711)	163
NINA GEERDINK	
Madame de Maintenon au miroir de sa correspondance: réhabilitation du personnage et redécouverte d'une écriture féminine	201
CHRISTINE MONGENOT ET HANS BOTS	
French Women Writers and Heroic Genres	235
PERRY GETHNER	

TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The Tartar Girl, The Persian Princess, and Early Modern English Women's Authorship from Elizabeth I to Mary Wroth	257
BERNADETTE ANDREA	
A Cloistered Nun Abroad: Arcangela Tarabotti's International Literary Career	283
LYNN LARA WESTWATER	
Traveller, Pedagogue and Cultural Mediator: Marie-Elisabeth de La Fite and her Female Context	309
INEKE JANSE	

Translation and Intellectual Reflection in the Works of Enlightened Spanish Women: Inés Joyes (1731–1808)	327
MÓNICA BOLUFER	
‘Nous voudrions que les femmes s’occupent de la littérature’: Traductions des romancières françaises en Russie autour de 1800	347
ELENA GRETCHANAIA	
Index Nominum	375

NOTES ON THE EDITORS

ANKE GILLEIR is Associate Professor of Modern German Literature at the University of Leuven. She has published on German women's literature (eighteenth until twentieth century), minority literature in Germany and Europe, gender and literature/literary theory, literature and politics, and the historiography of literature. Among her works are: *Johanna Schopenhauer und die Weimarer Klassik. Betrachtungen über die Selbstpositionierung weiblichen Schreibens* (2000), *Textmaschinenkörper. Genderorientierte Lektüren des Androiden* (with Angelika Schlimmer and Eva Kormman, 2006), *Literatur im Krebsgang. Totenbeschwörung und memoria in der deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1989* (with Arne de Winde, 2008). Her current research focus is on the work of the German-Jewish author and philosopher Margarete Susman.

ALICIA C. MONTROYA is Rosalind Franklin Fellow / Assistant Professor of Romance Languages at the University of Groningen. She is the author of *Marie-Anne Barbier et la tragédie post-classique* (2007), as well as the co-author, with Volker Schröder, of a critical edition of Barbier's play *Cornélie, mère des Gracques* (2005). In addition, she has published articles on early modern women writers and on French medievalism in various edited collections and journals. Her current book *Literary Modernity and Gallic Antiquity* focuses on late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century French medievalism, and includes discussions of women readers of chivalric literature and women's fairy tales.

SUZAN VAN DIJK is a specialist of French and comparative literature. She has published widely on the eighteenth and nineteenth-century press and novel writing, particularly in relation to the reception, at home and abroad, of women novelists. She is especially interested in IT-applications in the humanities, and has developed an online database and 'virtual collaboratory' entitled *Women Writers' Networks* (www.womenwriters.nl), which was awarded the 'International Innovation Award 2005' on the occasion of the XVIth International Conference of the Association for History and Computing (Amsterdam). She took the initiative for creating the international network entitled 'New

approaches to European Women's Writing' (NEWW), which is now developing into a European COST Action 'Women Writers in History' (2009–2013). She was the founding editor (in 2005) of the *Cahiers Isabelle de Charrière / Belle de Zuylen Papers*, and is currently preparing a book on Dutch discourse about women's writing (1770–1870).

NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

VANDA ANASTÁCIO is an Associate Professor at the Faculdade de Letras of the University of Lisbon, where she teaches Portuguese culture and literature of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries as well as Brazilian literature of the colonial period. Besides leading the team preparing the critical edition of the works and letters of the marquise of Alorna, she is currently a member of the project 'Portuguese women writers' of the Nova University in Lisbon. Recently, she has published the correspondence between the incarcerated marquise of Alorna and the countess of Vimiero, *Cartas de Lília e Tirse (1771–1777)* (2007), an edition of the marquise's *Sonnets* (2008) and a book of essays on the life and works of the same author, *A Marquesa de Alorna (1750–1839). Estudos* (2009).

BERNADETTE ANDREA (PhD, Cornell University) is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she chaired the Department of English, Classics, and Philosophy. Her main line of research focuses on women's writing from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century, with emphasis on Western European interactions with the Ottoman Empire. Her recent publications discuss modern Algerian, Egyptian, and Turkish women writers. She is the author of *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (2007).

PHILIEP BOSSIER is Professor of Italian Literature at the University of Groningen, where he holds the Chair of Early Modern Romance Literature. After his MA studies in Romance Philology at the Catholic University of Leuven, he obtained a post-graduate award at the University of Urbino. In his PhD (University of Leuven) he offered a systematic description of the new professionalism of theatre companies (*commedia dell'arte*) in the cultural context of post-1545 Italy. He has published widely on Italian theatre and Renaissance literature and is the author of *Ambasciatore della risa. La commedia dell'arte nel secondo Cinquecento* (2004).

HANS BOTS is emeritus Professor at the University of Nijmegen. He is the author of several books on the history of the Republic of Letters,

the periodical press during the Ancien Régime, and seventeenth and eighteenth-century correspondences. At present, as part of a research programme launched by the Collège de France, he is coordinating a critical edition of the correspondence of Madame de Maintenon.

MÓNICA BOLUFER is Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Valencia, specializing in eighteenth-century social and cultural history. Her research interests include the transnational dissemination and reception of women's writing, philosophical, moral and medical discourses on gender, notions of politeness and sensibility, and travel narratives. She is the author of *Mujeres e Ilustración* (*Women and Enlightenment*, 1998); *Amor, matrimonio y familia* (1998; with Isabel Morant), a critical edition of A. Ponz, *Viaje fuera de España* (*Travels outside Spain*, 2007), and *La vida y la escritura en el siglo XVIII. Inés Jeyes: "Apología de las mujeres"* (2008). She coedited *Historia de las mujeres en España y América Latina* (*A History of Women in Spain and Latin America*, 2005–2006).

NINA GEERDINK is a PhD candidate in the department of Dutch Literature at Free University Amsterdam (VU). Her research concerns seventeenth-century literature and her dissertation is about the self-representation of the early modern Dutch poets Jan Vos (1610–1667) and Katharina Lescailje (1649–1711).

PERRY GETHNER is Norris Professor of French and department head at Oklahoma State University. He has published critical editions of plays by Rotrou, Du Ryer and Mairêt, plus an anthology of works by women playwrights of the period 1650–1750. He is currently part of a team publishing a five-volume collection of works by women playwrights of the Ancien Régime. He has also published translations of various plays, including a volume of the women playwrights, with a second in progress. He has published numerous articles dealing with various aspects of early modern French drama and opera.

ELENA GRETCHANAIA is a researcher at the Institute for World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Her research focuses on cultural interaction between Russia and Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, autobiographical texts, and French-language Russian literature. Recent publications include *Interactions littéraires russo-françaises et contexte religieux. 1797–1825* (2002) (in Russian, French Leroy-Beaulieu prize, 2003), a Russian translation of Julie de

Krüdener, Valérie (2000), and the co-edited *Julie de Krüdener, Autour de Valérie. Œuvres de Madame de Krüdener* (2007); *Exil et épistolaire aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles: Des éditions aux inédits* (2007) and ‘*Si tu lis jamais ce journal...: Diaristes russes francophones. 1780–1854* (2008).

INEKE JANSE studied French literature at the University of Leiden, where she obtained her MA degree in 2008 with a thesis on the French Huguenot author Marie-Elisabeth de La Fite. She is currently preparing a larger project on the same subject.

MADELEINE JEAY is a Professor emerita at McMaster University, currently teaching for the Continuing Education department at the University of Sherbrooke. KATHLEEN GARAY is an archivist and adjunct Associate Professor in the Arts and Science Programme at McMaster University. Jeay and Garay have published two books together, a translation and edition of *The Life of Saint Douceline* (2001), and *The Distaff Gospels* (2006), a fifteenth-century collection of more than 250 popular beliefs which constitutes a kind of encyclopedia of late medieval women’s wisdom. Garay and Jeay have also worked together on a television series, *Mystic Women of the Middle Ages* (Red Canoe Productions, 2000, 2002) and a website on medieval women, <http://mw.mcmaster.ca/home.html> (2000).

ANNE-MARIE MAI, lic.phil. in Nordic literature, Aarhus University 1982, is Professor of Danish literature at the University of Southern Denmark, Institute of Literature, Media and Cultural Studies since 1999, and head of the board of the Danish Writers Academy since 2002. In her research, she focuses on the history of Danish literature and the history of Nordic women’s literature, and the history of the Scandinavian Enlightenment. She has (co-)edited and published, among others, *Nordic Light* (2008), *Nordisk Kvindelitteraturhistorie (History of Nordic Women’s Literature, 1993–1998)*, *Læsninger i dansk litteratur 1200–2000*, vols. I–V (*Studies in Danish Literature 1200–2000*, 1997–2000).

CHRISTINE MONGENOT, a graduate of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, is a lecturer at the Université de Cergy-Pontoise. Her research focuses on the forms of moral discourse in seventeenth-century pedagogical literature, and on the relation between these minor genres and women’s writing. These questions are also addressed in her forthcoming dissertation, *Conversations et Proverbes de Madame de Maintenon ou la naissance du théâtre*

d'éducation. She is also responsible for volume V of the edition of Madame de Maintenon's general correspondence. In addition, she is the author of various articles and conference papers on Maintenon's pedagogical writings, as well as on her correspondence.

MEREDITH K. RAY is Assistant Professor of Italian at the University of Delaware and the author of *Writing Gender in Women's Letter Collections of the Italian Renaissance* (2009). She has published articles on gender and epistolary writing, convent culture in early modern Venice, and the heterodox religious culture of sixteenth-century Italy, and is the co-editor of the *Lettere familiari* of Arcangela Tarabotti (2005).

INA SCHABERT is Professor emerita at the University of Munich. Her research interests include gender in English and Continental European literature and social life, and the history of (female and male) feminism. Recent publications include *Englische Literaturgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine neue Darstellung aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung* (2006); *Wolfgang Clemen im Kontext seiner Zeit: Ein Beitrag zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte vor und nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (2009); and *Shakespeare Handbuch*, 5th revised and enlarged edition (2009).

LYNN WESTWATER (Ph.D. University of Chicago, 2003) is Assistant Professor of Italian and Italian program director at The George Washington University. She has published widely on early modern women's writing; plagiarism in early modern Italy; and cultural production in Italian border regions. She co-edited a critical edition of seventeenth-century Venetian nun Arcangela Tarabotti's correspondence (*Lettere familiari e di complimento*, 2005) and an English translation. She is currently preparing a book on gender polemics in seventeenth-century Venice.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 (accompanying the article by Vanda Anastácio):

- Fig. 1. Franz Joseph Pitschmann, Portrait of Dona Leonor de Almeida Portugal, marquise of Alorna, painted in Vienna, 1780. Image © Fundação das Casas de Fronteira e Alorna 101

Figures 1–3 (accompanying the article by Meredith K. Ray):

- Fig. 1. Artist unknown, Portrait of Moderata Fonte. From *Il merito delle donne* (Venice, Domenico Imberti: 1600). Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania 137
- Fig. 2. Title page of *I secreti della signora Isabella Cortese* (Venice, Bariletto: 1574). E.F. Smith Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania 143
- Fig. 3. Johann Theodor de Bry, Emblem XXII. From Michael Maier, *Atalanta fugiens* (Oppenheim, De Bry: 1618). E.F. Smith Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania 152

Figures 1–4 (accompanying the article by Nina Geerdink):

- Fig. 1. Nic. Verkolje, *Katharina Lescailje* (1693). Pencil in grey on black chalk, 23,6 × 16,3 cm. Teylers Museum Haarlem, Inv. nr. PP 780 191
- Fig. 2. Title page of Katharina Lescailje et al., *Op het huuwelyk van de heer Pieter Koolaert, en mejuffrouw Elizabeth Hoofman. Getrouwd in Haarlem, den 23 van Oegstmaand, 1693* (Amsterdam, heirs of J. Lescailje: 1693). University Library Leiden, UBL 1099 H 18:2 192

- Fig. 3. Title page of Katharina Lescailje, *Tooneel- en mengelpoëzy* (Amsterdam, heirs of J. Lescailje en D. Rank: 1731). University Library Utrecht, UBU THO: MEG 10-250/251/252 193
- Fig. 4. *Klucht of Vernieuwende gedachtenis van de Púrgeerende Boontiens*, ca. 1680. Engraving, 35,3 × 39,4 cm. University Library Amsterdam (UvA), Special Collections P00015853. 194

Figure 1 (accompanying the article by Bernadette Andrea):

- Fig. 1. Map of Tartaria from Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (Antwerp, Aegidius Coppenius Diesth: 1570). The title of the map reads, ‘RVSSIAE, MOSCOVIAE ET TARTARIAE DESCRIPTIO. Auctore Antonio Ienkensono Anglo, edita Londini. Anno, 1562’ [...] (‘Image of Russia, Moscovia and Tartaria by Anthony Jenkinson, Englishman, published in London, 1562’ [...]). Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin 278

INTRODUCTION: TOWARD A NEW CONCEPTION OF WOMEN'S LITERARY HISTORY¹

Anke Gilleir and Alicia C. Montoya

European interest in early modern women writers is on the rise. After a period during which research in this field was confined almost exclusively to the English-speaking world and to the American academy, there are signs that this interest is in the process of broadening its geographic scope. Thus, during the last few decades, a considerable number of new histories of women's writing and biographical dictionaries of women authors, as well as anthologies and editions of their works, have been published in continental Europe. Important new histories have appeared of women's writing in the Netherlands,² Hungary³ and Scandinavia,⁴ to name but a few examples – while other countries, notably France, are currently in the process of mapping out this field.⁵ These publications, coming after and confirming earlier

¹ This introduction draws in part on a NEWW (*New approaches to European Women's Writing*) working document, entitled "Going European? Toward a European Women's Literary History. New Instruments – New Materials – New Questions", which we originally drafted in April 2008, and subsequently adapted in response to other NEWW member comments. We gratefully acknowledge their input and the fruitful discussions that helped to shape our document, and especially Suzan van Dijk's first version of it. On the NEWW project, see below.

² In the Netherlands, a major overview of women's writing of the period 1550–1850, entitled *Met en zonder lauwerkrans* (With and without laurels), was published in 1997; an English-language version is currently being prepared. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans. Schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850: van Anna Bijns tot Elise van Calcar* (Amsterdam: 1997); see also Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R., "Met en zonder lauwerkrans in an International Perspective", in Dijk S. van – Gemert L. van – Ottway S. (eds.), *Writing the History of Women's Writing. Toward an International Approach* (Amsterdam: 2001) 239–250.

³ Fábri A., *'A szép tiltott táj fele': a magyar trón''ok története két századforduló között (1795–1905)* (Budapest: 1996) ("Toward the Forbidden Ground": A History of Hungarian Women Writers Between Two Centuries.)

⁴ Møller-Jensen E. et al. (eds.), *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria*, 5 vols. (Copenhagen – Stockholm: 1993–1999).

⁵ In France, the *Société internationale pour l'étude des femmes d'ancien régime* (SIEFAR) is currently preparing an online dictionary of French women writers, available at www.siefar.org/DicoAc.html, accessed August 15, 2009.

English-language scholarship, are important as corrections to ‘classical’ European literary history, with its dominance of male canonized authors. Moreover, they often also function as catalysts for renewed scholarly attention to individual women writers and their work. In addition to these historical overviews and anthologies, there is also a growing tendency within continental European scholarship to address more general questions concerning women’s writing, the professionalization of female authors, women’s reading, and the roles played by female cultural transmitters.

Yet despite their undeniable qualities, these historical overviews, anthologies, and more general works often remain traditional in the sense that authors are almost always considered within the limits of a single nation or language area. As such, these new contributions to historical knowledge about the literary past follow the lines of thought that were set out in the nineteenth century, when the nation-state became the dominant framework for the study of modern literatures. Historical questions concerning the professionalization of female authorship are likewise invariably approached from a national viewpoint. In addition, they are addressed with various degrees of intensity and depth in different language areas. Because women writers who wrote in English have been more frequently studied, their cases are also more often presented as examples, while references to (for instance) Spanish-language texts in general discourses on women’s literary history are virtually absent, as Lisa Vollendorf noted some years ago.⁶ The problem is not only that the prominence of one literature implies the neglect of others, but maybe even more so that too many generalizations on women’s writing are made on too restricted a basis. Isabelle Brouard-Arends for example, writing about the French Ancien Régime, makes a statement that is symptomatic of this tendency to generalise: ‘Les livres de femme ont beaucoup été écrits d’abord pour d’autres femmes, complicité affective, mise en commun d’intérêts privés, sentimentaux ou familiaux’.⁷ But in what sense is this impression of writing and

⁶ Vollendorf L., “The Problems and Promises of Early Modern Gender Studies: The Case of Spain”, in *Laberinto* (<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/laberinto/2002/vollendorf.htm>), accessed July 25, 2009.

⁷ Brouard-Arends I., “Introduction”, in *Lectrices d’Ancien Régime* (Rennes: 2003)10. Her statement, besides, is at odds with Joep Leerssen’s one that ‘everyone agrees that women have been the prime readers in European literary history’. Leerssen J., “Women Authors and Literary History”, in Dijk, *Writing the History* 253 and 256.

reading women clustering together really true for different countries and periods? And does she mean that for women authors gender may necessarily have had a priority above nationality?

Of course, it takes little historical insight to realise that literature was never, really, much of a national product, despite the fact that it was often written in a single, national language. One of the greatest challenges to the growing body of research on women's literature from the early modern period is to transcend the customary national scope and opt for a broader, international approach. A large-scale, international approach of this matter would in fact be in line with the present-day, increasing global awareness in literary studies, and with the publication of books like Pascale Casanova's *La République mondiale des lettres*⁸ or the earlier *Lettres Européennes. Histoire de la littérature européenne*.⁹ Within a perspective inspired by Bourdieu, Casanova for example argues that 'contre les frontières nationales que produisent la croyance nationale (et les nationalismes), l'univers littéraire produit sa géographie et ses propres découpages'.¹⁰ Nonetheless, gender and international scope seem, in the rest of her argument, to be exclusive categories, for despite her declared focus on 'literary quality and singularity',¹¹ women authors – and early modern authors in general – are conspicuously absent from her 'World Republic of Letters', while on the contrary much lesser-known male authors are given honourable mention. In *Lettres Européennes*, likewise, the gender perspective is not taken into account: among the several dozen authors singled out for individual attention at the end of each chapter, not a single woman is mentioned before the present-day period. This is all the more remarkable for the fact that, to the extent that early modern women participated in international literary movements, from humanism through classicism to early Romanticism, they were active in a literary field that was perhaps, due to the relatively small number of its participants, much more truly transnational than our present-day globalized – and increasingly glocalized – one.

⁸ Casanova P., *La République mondiale des Lettres* (Paris: 1999).

⁹ Benoit-Dusaioy A. – Fontaine G. (eds.), *Lettres européennes. Histoire de la littérature européenne* (Paris: 1992).

¹⁰ Casanova, *République mondiale* 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 5.

New Approaches to European Women's Writing

The present volume arose out of what we felt was a need for a more explicitly international or transnational focus in studies of early modern women's writing. At the same time, it seeks to privilege a more sociological approach, rather than one that is based largely on textual analysis. In other words, it aims to provide new insights into women's position in the literary field by emphasising the international scope of their literature and examining their historical position, influence, network and dialogues – leading, in the long term, to different places being assigned to them in literary history. In its aims, this book is part of a larger research programme entitled *New approaches to European Women's Writing* (NEWW), which studies women authors more globally and addresses their different roles as authors, readers and transmitters: their position (as compared to men's) both in the European literary field during their own lifetime and in literary history before 1900.¹² Within this larger project, the cut-off date of 1900 was chosen bearing in mind the rise of international feminist movements toward the end of the nineteenth century. While this development did not necessarily put an end to the older 'querelle des femmes', it did rapidly change the relations between male and female actors in the literary field, necessitating a different kind of historiography.

There are several reasons, however, why an earlier cut-off date would seem as relevant, if not more so, to a new understanding of women's writing. In the first place, much previous research in women's literature, because of its emphasis on English-language texts, naturally concentrated on the so-called 'Golden Age' of English-language women's literature, the nineteenth century.¹³ This led to a somewhat teleological tendency to consider earlier women's writing as a forerunner to the nineteenth-century 'classic' troika Austen-Eliot-Brontës or, as Dale Spender put it in the subtitle of a well-known book, to search for 'good women writers *before* Jane Austen' (our emphasis).¹⁴ While this

¹² For a brief presentation and history of the NEWW project, see Dijk S. van – Gilleur A. – Montoya A.C., "Before NEWW (*New approaches to European Women's Writing*): Prolegomena to the Launching of an International Project", *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 27, 1 (2008) 151–157. See also the NEWW website: www.womenwriters.nl.

¹³ The seminal work in this respect was Showalter E., *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton: 1977).

¹⁴ Spender D., *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers before Jane Austen* (London: 1986).

teleological tendency has now largely been superseded by more recent scholarship, there is still a need to consider early modern women's authorship in its own right, since it developed in an altogether different context than that underwriting the rise of national literary histories in the nineteenth century. Thus, our approach focuses on the period in literary history before the elaboration of the aesthetic ideology of the individual poet of genius, i.e. the highly gendered model of the modern *poeta vates* that arose in the course of the eighteenth century and still dominates our notion of authorship today. A third reason, finally, why an examination of women's authorship within a specifically early modern setting would seem necessary is the relatively limited scope of the phenomenon of female authorship during the early modern period, as compared to the period starting in the nineteenth century. Fewer authors and a smaller number of readers within national borders necessarily meant that women authors, more often than not, wrote for an expanded, international audience – as indeed did many of their male counterparts. If the unearthing of international or transnational networks was one of our primary goals, then it seemed logical to concentrate, in the present volume, on the period that actually gave rise to the notion of the international 'republic of letters'.¹⁵

The larger NEWW project prepares new historiography in that it explicitly addresses these questions on gender and literature from a comparative and international angle. Indeed, long before the advent of feminist movements,¹⁶ women in different countries – especially women transgressing accepted norms – were conscious of their common preoccupations, sought mutual empowerment by reading each other's writing and sometimes even tried to enter into contact with one another. Many of these contacts are currently being rediscovered, after having been papered over by historiography written within a national framework. In this historiography, images and feelings about national identity tended to play an important role and processes of international cross-fertilization were discounted. But contrary to this narrowly nationalistic view proposed by nineteenth-century historians, for much of the early modern period, authors operated within an international literary field. In particular, for much of this period, Renaissance Italy

¹⁵ See, among others, Fumaroli M. (ed.), *Les premiers siècles de la République européenne des Lettres* (Paris: 2005).

¹⁶ Studied from an internationalist angle in McFadden M.H., *Golden Cables of Sympathy. The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism* (Lexington: 1999).

and later classicist France actually fulfilled the function of model – and sometimes, counter-model – for authors elsewhere in Europe. Positive evaluations of French literary culture played an important role in the increasing acceptance of women's authorship, as developed in French *salon* culture, at least until the rise of nationalist movements starting in the late eighteenth century. This is the tendency that was rejected by the proponents of the modern turn toward national frameworks. The case of Gottfried Herder, for example, demonstrates how a search for an ideal of German femininity went hand in hand with his horror of learned women in French culture such as Emilie du Châtelet or Anne Dacier.¹⁷

We are very conscious of the fact that in earlier phases of research on women's writing the international scope was difficult to adopt: earlier scholars had to start somewhere, and existing national historiography was an obvious point of departure. A focus on only one country or language area was further justified by practical reasons and by an established research tradition in literary studies in which the word 'comparative' in 'comparative literature' is, as Gayatri Spivak states, 'more a distinguishing mark than a signifier'.¹⁸ It is only due to the fact that much groundbreaking work has already been done on the individual and national levels that new, broader approaches have today become possible.

An important source of inspiration for our new look at the history of literature comes from the work of Mario Valdés and Linda Hutcheon. Their *Rethinking Literary History* presents a challenge to current literary historiography in that it proposes to shift away 'from the nation-state and therefore away from the usual national historical models based on single ethnicity and single language', and to adopt instead 'a comparative transnational focus'.¹⁹ Their proposal provides a theoretical underpinning to the results of empirical research, that increasingly reveals the existence of ties – 'real' or textual – between early modern women authors operating within different national contexts. In our NEWW database (www.databasewomenwriters.nl), we have undertaken to record all known instances of the reception of works by European

¹⁷ Gilieir A., "‘Doppelter Knoten’. Metaphorik und Geschlecht in Herders literatur- und kulturkritischem Diskurs", *Herder Jahrbuch/Herder Yearbook* 10 (2009) forthcoming.

¹⁸ Spivak G.C., *Death of a Discipline* (New York: 2003) 108.

¹⁹ Hutcheon L. – Valdés M.J., *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory* (New York – Oxford: 2002) 8, 26.

women authors by other women authors – women translating works by other women, women reacting to their works, women acting as patrons to other women, etc. – in the period before 1900. To date, we have recorded thousands of these ties, suggesting that such links were much more common and much more central to the constitution of a female public space than has as yet been assumed. Multilateral contacts and the necessity of a multi-directional approach are thus suggesting and outlining themselves, as we are discerning international impact and what we might call 'unsuspected networks'. These shed light on international female (publishing) successes on the one hand, and on the other provide an important context for studying women writers in smaller countries, who in numerous cases appeared at first sight to be isolated figures.

It seems to us important not only to approach the literary field from a broader, i.e. transnational perspective, but also to consider the reception of women's writing in their own day in an attempt to estimate women writers' real historical significance. What was their contemporary influence? Which active roles did they play as authors and readers in the broadest sense of the word, i.e. including their roles as transcribers, translators, and mediators? The great importance of these questions – which reminds us of Leopold Ranke's famous dictum that the most reliable evidence concerning past events lies in records created contemporaneously with the events themselves – becomes obvious to anyone considering, for instance, eighteenth-century representations and qualifications of writing women (poetasters, Bluestockings, Dilettantes), and conscious of the fact that those portrayals still influence present-day conceptions of female authorship. For certain periods and cases some revision has been taking place: for seventeenth-century France and salon culture for example, Joan DeJean, going back to contemporary reception and early historiography, set an example which is still to be followed on a European-wide scale.²⁰ For the eighteenth century, Dena Goodman has demonstrated the importance of female mediators in shaping Enlightenment culture.²¹ And for other countries and periods, similar studies are beginning to reveal the various

²⁰ DeJean J., *Tender Geographies. Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: 1991).

²¹ Goodman D., *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca – London: 1994).

roles women played not only as producers of literature, but also as readers, journalists, patrons and translators.

Women Writing Back / Writing Women Back

Our objective in the present volume is, in other words, to enhance our understanding of the part women played – on a collective as well as on an individual level in their dialogues as authors and readers, both among their own sex and with men – in the shaping of the literary field in Europe before 1900. This ‘enhanced understanding’ focuses on the women’s side of what Mario J. Valdés termed the ‘history of literary culture’,²² viewed from a transnational perspective, and the essays in this volume provide insights and single case studies, which in a next phase could be integrated into a more general historiography. This explains the double title of the volume: *Women Writing Back / Writing Women Back*. We wanted not only to present a number of case studies in which women wrote back to a dominant male discourse – an approach already taken by quite a number of studies focusing on women’s participation in the literary field – but more importantly, we also wanted to ask how it would be possible for us today to write women back into literary historiography. In other words, what conceptual tools and theoretical models would be needed in order to write women back into literary history not merely as interesting footnotes or ‘cases’, but actually as an integral part of the early modern literary field? As our subtitle suggests, we felt that a crucial element would be an emphasis on the transnational dimension. Indeed, so long as we continue to view early modern women writers within a narrowly national framework, they will continue to appear as isolated cases, often belonging to no identifiable literary school and lacking the broader resonance of their more well-known male counterparts.

The present volume was thus conceived as a sort of test case: would it be possible, if we asked a number of authors to present the results of their work on a number of case studies of female authorship in different periods, countries and literary genres, to reach some sense of the larger history of women’s writing yet to be written? The volume

²² Valdés M.J., “Rethinking the History of Literary History”, in Hutcheon L. – Valdés M.J., *Rethinking Literary History* 67.

covers a diverse range of national literatures and periods: from Russia to Portugal, and from Spain to Denmark and the Netherlands. This is partly a conscious choice – too often, as we mentioned, generalizations about women's writing are made on the basis of too little evidence – but it is also a reflection of the status of current research, and of its very fragmented nature. As noted, research still tends to concentrate on a few select authors, language areas and genres and as long as these continue to be overrepresented, our view of literary history will remain skewed. In particular, so long as authors writing within smaller language areas are not studied in conjunction with each other, they will most likely remain forgotten. Hence our effort in this volume to pay more attention to some lesser-studied women's literatures, at least from an Anglophone perspective. Thus, Anne-Marie Mai focuses in her essay on sixteenth-century Danish literature, while Vanda Anastácio focuses on eighteenth-century Portugal, Mónica Bolufer on eighteenth-century Spain, and Elena Gretchanaia on eighteenth-century Russia. For some regions, unfortunately, research on women's writing is only now beginning to develop as an independent subfield within the larger field of literary studies. This, too, is reflected in our volume, which has many absences: Eastern Europe is almost completely absent, as are countries such as Greece and Ireland. On the other hand, the large presence of Italy and France in this volume to some extent mirrors the model function these cultures had in Europe from the end of the Middle Ages to the dawn of the modern era at the end of the eighteenth century. The Italian Renaissance, which was so influential in opening new fields of learning to women, as well as seventeenth and eighteenth-century French (salon) culture, are discussed in several articles. France, as frequently pointed out, most recently by Marc Fumaroli,²³ played a central role during more than two centuries in the wider European field, and could therefore not fail to do so in any history emphasizing the role of cultural transfer in the constitution of new literary traditions.

Our volume is divided into three different sections: female spaces, literary genre, and transnational perspectives. The first section clusters contributions in which the foundation of female networks or 'enclaves' for women authors transcending the dominant ideology of female subordination is uncovered. The section on literary genre reveals how

²³ Fumaroli M., *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (Paris: 2001).

different authors in different periods handled genre conventions, tailoring them to their specific themes and positions vis-à-vis mainstream literary life. The transnational perspective, finally, focuses on women authors and their international scope, either on a personal level or as a result of the geographic distribution of their work.

Female Spaces, Female Communities

Although most of the essays in this section start out from a national framework, most also touch on the ways in which transnational influences may have contributed to the formation of local female literary networks, and encouraged the clustering studied by Gerda Lerner. As Lerner states in her historical analysis of the rise of feminist consciousness, the lack of collective expressions of female argument in the course of history certainly has its origin in the omnipresent ideology of female subordination in patriarchal society. ‘The ultimate consequence of man’s power to define has a profound effect on women’s struggle for their own emancipation [...] it has forced thinking women to waste much time and energy on defensive arguments [...]’.²⁴ Religion was one of the spheres which women first tried to reconceptualise so as to be allowed to play ‘an equal and central role in the Christian drama of Fall and Redemption’.²⁵ In a universal Christian culture such as it existed in the late Middle Ages, the creation of a female space automatically implied the transcending of local borders in the light of a greater truth. This is what the first article of this section, Madeleine Jeay and Kathleen Garay’s analysis of the strategies of authorship and readership among mystic women in the later Middle Ages, shows. In spite of the fact that the role of women in official ecclesiastic institutions was extremely restricted due to theological dogma and a lack of education that excluded them from the official lingua franca, Jeay and Garay demonstrate that this did not prevent them from speaking or authoring and being listened to, even if they did not write themselves. Spiritual women such as Hildegard von Bingen and Hadewych recorded their visions or wrote poetry in Latin or the vernacular, but

²⁴ Lerner G., *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness from the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York – Oxford: 1993) 10.

²⁵ Lerner, *Feminist Consciousness* 11.

the authorial norm of the life of pious women was written down by a male scribe. Still, a great amount of material reveals women's active involvement in the preparation of their spiritual literature, claiming the authority of the message and thus negotiating their authorship. At the same time, the dissemination of these works, which came to function as *exempla* for other inspired women, happened through both male and female transmission, either written or oral, either in Latin or in a vernacular translation, and made possible the diffusion of the female mystic movement across the European continent through the networks of individuals and communities.

The overview of reading and writing cultures that created some form of intellectual breathing space for women in the late Middle Ages offers a useful point of comparison for the later case of the Danish aristocrat Anne Krabbe, collector and annotator of folk ballads, studied in Anne Marie Mai's essay. Collecting early Danish literature was an aristocratic pastime in her day, yet in the case of Krabbe it was also part of a process of self-fashioning which she started after the untimely death of her husband. Her annotations of the songs and ballads link the fictional plots to the place of her own habitat, transferring art unto the real world and turning the world into an artefact in which she established her own place and created her own history. From this point of view it is interesting to note that Krabbe immersed herself in a world of female protagonists who do not resemble the reformist model of the family mother, as they combine archaic elements of honour, self-defence and revenge. The collector's association with these worlds that were lost but for the presumed place where the stories took place is mentioned explicitly: 'I Anne Krabbe have personally been there'.

Anne Krabbe's aristocratic consciousness is the framework through which she attempted to establish herself within patriarchal society, as did noble women authors in Renaissance England, too. Although some of them, such as Mary, Countess of Pembroke and Mary Cavendish, Countess of Newcastle, showed a strong awareness of the cultural confinement of women, these authors did not use their texts to generate a spiritual or intellectual community for women enabling them to grasp the 'power to define'. This form of intellectual female bonding happened only in the last decades of the seventeenth century, after several women authors had brought women to the forefront in their work in various manners in the course of the century. As in the mystic movement several centuries before, here too the female drive for intellectual emancipation happened within the domain of religion.

Thus in her Passion poem 'Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum' (1611), the poetess Aemilia Lanyer contributes a new element to the portrayal of women in the life of Christ, pictures images of female togetherness and eventually develops her poem into a defence of women. This strand of thought concerning female solidarity developed markedly in the second half of the seventeenth century, when authors such as Bathsua Makin, Mary Astell and Judith Drake published texts in which they defended women's right to education and drew upon mythology and histories of famous women to reinforce their claims. Thus female solidarity developed into an issue in English life and letters, only to disappear at the end of the century for nearly a hundred years.

Vanda Anastácio's analysis of the historical discourse on Portuguese women writers of the eighteenth century also unearths a world of intellectual female activity that was lost in the literary historiography of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whose register on femininity was at odds with the phenomenon of intellectually active women. As intellectual and cultural life in Portugal opened up to influences from Europe after the earthquake of 1755, women were allowed more freedom and convents ceased to be the only accepted place for female learning. In secular urban life, the so-called *assembleias* gathered together talented men and women of letters, enabling and reinforcing literary, political and spiritual interchanges in which women took part. Different authors such as the marquise of Alorna, Joana Isabel Forjaz or Francisca de Paula Possollo da Costa wrote and translated a variety of texts and transcended borders in many ways with their oeuvre. However, historiography could not posthumously categorise these 'man-like women', and smoothing over their work in a rhetoric of feminine modesty made us lose trace of them.

Although these four essays all adopt, to a greater or lesser extent, a national framework for their discussion of female communities, all show too how women or female-authored texts that transcended or contested the nation helped women to shape their own aspirations and literary roles. Thus the women mystics studied by Jeay and Garay consciously operated within a European-wide framework, while both the English authors studied by Schabert and the Portuguese women studied by Anastácio drew inspiration from the example set by the highly visible French *salonnières*. Mai offers, on the other hand, an interesting case of a woman author who explicitly sought to position her own work in a local, familial – and thereby again, non-national – context: a topic that surely needs to be explored further for different national literary traditions.

Appropriating Literary Genre

The second section of the volume is perhaps the most traditional, in the sense that the national framework is largely dominant in the case studies examined. It is probably no accident, therefore, that all but one of the articles focus on the two literatures that played a central role in the early modern European literary landscape: those of Renaissance Italy and of seventeenth and eighteenth-century France. Women authors operating in countries with a flourishing literary culture apparently had less need to legitimate their own position by means of mutual feminine empowerment across national borders. Instead, their literature often appears as a subtle play with the conventions of their time, revealing a complex balance between strict poetical rules, processes of imagination and the ubiquitous prejudice against the 'femme savante'.

In his contribution Philiep Bossier analyzes the case of the sixteenth-century poet Maddalena Campiglia, whose literary work should be situated both within the local intellectual landscape of the city of Vicenza and the larger context of Italian Renaissance literature, in order to grasp the intertextual and stylistic strategies which she used to position herself. Campiglia was the author of two pastoral dramas, the new literary genre developed by Torquato Tasso with which, only a few years before, he had defied the restricting dominance of Aristotelian rule in literary practice. As a new and thus non-established literary form, dealing with uncommon themes, the pastoral drama soon became a generic 'free space' for new talent in the literary field such as Campiglia's. The rhetorical language in her *Flori* (1588), especially in the two dedicatory letters preceding the play, reveals Campiglia's command of the dominant rules as well as her – subtle – defiance of the literary establishment; she both uses and names the codes in an ironical way to establish herself as a true author in an otherwise misogynist context.

A skilful battle against the dogmas of her time is also present in the work of another Italian author, Moderata Fonte, whose *Il merito delle donne* (The Worth of Women), published in 1600, entered more explicitly into discussion with her contemporaries in another episode of the 'querelle des femmes'. Yet Fonte's book is not a mere rejection of the subjection of women and praise of female supremacy expressed in the fictional dialogue between the women protagonists. As Meredith Ray shows, Fonte's *Il merito delle donne* also reveals a deep engagement with the medical and scientific discourse that was gaining traction with the new scientific spirit of her day. Based on empirical practice and a

strong attention to the workings of the natural world, this new spirit also allowed for female involvement at various levels. Fonte's text belongs to the tradition of 'books of secrets', in which recipes for all possible ailments and practices, often based on alchemical procedures, were handed down to an increasing – and increasingly female – readership. Moderata offers a strong reply to the rejection of women's involvement in scientific culture, as it had for example been expressed in the work of Ortensio Lando. Lando's *Lettere di molte valorose donne* (Letters of Many Valorous Women, 1548) ostensibly praises female virtue, yet at the same time criticizes the growing tradition of women's involvement in alchemy and natural recipes, which, considering female susceptibility to error, he perceived as a growing threat.

Nina Geerdink's essay on the Dutch poet Katharina Lescaijle, the author of a large corpus of nuptial poems, offers another case of a woman who confidently appropriated and defended her own competence in an otherwise male-dominated field, in this case the poetic genre of nuptial poetry. In a detailed analysis of several of Lescaijle's nuptial poems, Geerdink reveals how she adapted or even inverted several conventions according to the occasion and her relationship to the addressees of her poetry. Particularly conspicuous, for example, are the ways in which in Lescaijle's poetry, marriage appears as a loss of liberty for the bride, thereby subverting the genre conventions of the epithalamion, in which the groom conventionally appears as the one who loses freedom. As conspicuous as this reversal of roles is the way the poems underscore the presence of the poet, proud *auctor* of her own style and message and representative of an ambition and professionalism that did not have their equal in Holland in her day.

Christine Mongenot and Hans Bots 'write back' into literary history Françoise, marquise de Maintenon, the second, controversial wife of Louis XIV, whose image became prey to ideological speculations and forged biographical portraits from the moment she entered the royal court at Versailles as the tutor of the king's illegitimate children in 1661. On the basis of a new and exhaustive edition of her letters, the image of the bigoted Catholic wife, rejoicing at the king's rejection of the Edict of Nantes and the expulsion of the Protestants from France ('hérétiques à l'église'), is replaced by a much more thoughtful picture of the non-recognized queen, urging the king to start negotiating with his foes in order to gain peace. Equally in her letters, Maintenon's pedagogical project at her school Saint Cyr appears as a finely tuned exercise positioned between worldly needs and religious dedication.

Yet these findings do not reveal an unaffected, 'natural' female spirit. On the contrary, they reveal the image of a woman very conscious of her unique position and responsibilities, perfectly in control of the registers of the 'mise en scène scripturale' of her culture. Just as Fonte and Campiglia had done before her, Maintenon succeeded in tailoring the conventions of a (re)nascent, as yet somewhat marginal literary genre – the 'personal' letter – to the needs of her own expression as a female author.

Perry Gethner's analysis of heroic genres, finally, addresses the way in which women authors participated in the canonized literary forms of early modern France, taking into account the weight of French cultural prestige and sense of imperialism associated with them. In spite of this daunting context, several female authors took up this challenge and gained control over symbolically dominant genres such as epic poetry, tragedy and tragic opera, carefully negotiating long and outstanding existing traditions and rigid conventions. Marie de Pech de Calages and Anne-Marie du Boccage adapted patterns of heroism to a more feminine mode in epic poetry. In the case of tragedy, women playwrights, facing the challenge of the strong tradition established by Racine and his peers, as well as a critical audience, had to master convention in order to explore unconventional views. Catherine Bernard was the first woman author whose tragedies were staged at the Comédie Française, featuring female protagonists with a sense of altruism that transcended the traditional male mode of obstinate revenge. Louise-Geneviève de Saintogne composed for the Académie Royale de Musique and transmitted in her operas an image of human imperfection, making all her characters fail to achieve anything glorious. Although the margins within which they operated were extremely narrow, these examples show how women authors succeeded in introducing a distinctly female voice even into the most convention-bound and male-gendered of literary genres.

Transnational Perspectives

After these cases of women authors who made their way into the often densely populated and normative local literary culture, the final section focuses on cases of international dissemination, influence and contact. Bernadette Andrea commences this section with her article on the 'Tartar Girl' and the 'Persian Princess' with a double question: how

did a female sovereign such as Elizabeth I represent herself to foreign Eastern monarchies such as Persia or Turkey without falling back on the Orientalist discourse of her time, and how does one acknowledge the presence or role of displaced subaltern – in this case, female – subjects both in England and the East in the absence of first-person narratives bearing witness to their experiences? The ‘Tartar girl’ is only a brief mention in the list of a colonial expedition, while the Persian princess – Lady Sherley, wife of the Persian ambassador to the English crown – was more amply present in the English imaginative discourse of the seventeenth century. Andrea’s analysis retraces these images back through the works of Mary Wroth, whose controversial literature, she argues, incorporated these foreign aspects, giving these archival absences a distinct textual presence.

Lynn Westwater presents the case of Arcangela Tarabotti, a strictly cloistered Venetian nun whose writings challenged the religious practice of lifelong enclosuring. In her work *Paternal Tyranny*, she protested against this injustice and revealed the economic and political as well as the religious forces that lay behind the practice of forced monachisation. The combative tone of this work complicated its publication in the Venetian republic, and after realising the enormous problems of having her book published in Italy, Tarabotti spent a lifetime of diplomatic contacts and networking in order to have her manuscript circulated and eventually printed abroad. Her first desired country of destination was France, which the author considered a ‘paradise for women’ where the publication of her opus magnum would be greeted positively. Nevertheless it took much effort and a stubborn dedication on her part to get her work published and distributed in Europe.

Ineke Janse shows how the well-known French female educators Françoise de Maintenon, Marie-Thérèse de Lambert and Jeanne Leprince de Beaumont were far from being the only ones exerting their influence across national borders. Others took their cue from them and in fact reinforced their international influence. The case studied here, of Marie-Elisabeth La Fite née Bouée, ties in with the history of the Huguenot diaspora, the Enlightenment spread of educational ideas, and constitutes an interesting case of a ‘modern’ woman writer. La Fite sought financial independence through her work, and also provided an important example to her daughter, who unfortunately did not live past the age of fifteen. In her letters, presented here for the first time, we have a revealing testimony of the mother’s influence.

Rectifying the general image of the muted, marginal and scanty presence of women in Hispanic literary history, Monica Bolufer's contribution deals with the case of the Spanish author and translator Inés Joyes. This middle-class provincial woman of Irish descent, whose presence – or even existence – can barely be recounted through archival sources, translated Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* after an inconspicuous provincial existence in 1798. Joyes did not belong to the brilliant reformist aristocratic circles in Spain, yet her choice to translate Johnson's novel, displaying a disenchanting view of marriage, reveals a liberated spirit, which is underscored by the fact that she added a bold essay of her own to her translation, dealing with women's problematic social and moral situation.

Finally, in the last article of the volume, Elena Gretchanaia documents the important presence in Russia, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, of French women novelists, whose works were either read in French or in translation. Sources not used up to now, such as library catalogues and private diaries, furnish testimonies of this presence, which could be further documented thanks to large-scale inventories of printed Russian books which include mentions of print runs. It appears that at the time, large numbers of women little appreciated in France and not translated into other European languages, did find their way to Russia. These women were instrumental for the development of Russian literature. Critics such as Nikolai Karamzine and his followers explicitly formulated their appreciation, which, in the first half of the nineteenth century, stimulated Russian women to write novels – first in French and soon also in Russian.

Conclusion: Articulating Female Writing

The present volume thus explores the various ways in which women's writing in the early modern period can fruitfully be approached from a transnational perspective. This transnational perspective can assume the form of a strictly comparative approach – i.e., one where it is *us today* who detect parallels between women writers operating in different national contexts, regardless of whether they themselves may have been aware of such commonality of interests or approaches. Alternatively, it can assume a more historical bias, relying on documentary

and empirical evidence pertaining to these women's biographies or literary contacts. In the former case, the emphasis is on transnational networks of a primarily textual nature, while in the latter it is on historically verifiable, direct contacts between women authors. In either case, the transnational, like a palimpsest, quickly reveals another dimension, that of gender. It was through international contacts, by creating new female networks, that early modern women authors also created something we would call today 'women's writing' – by definition not bound by any national or geographic limitation. It is especially when we juxtapose the works that women produced in different cultural settings that there emerges something like a female literary tradition, and that we begin to perceive common patterns and a set of common questions to which female authors, each in their own local framework, offered their own answers. Yet at the same time, these shared patterns displayed a wide range of variation. While the Portuguese authors discussed by Anastácio and the Russian ones discussed by Gretchanaia, for example, certainly drew inspiration from their French counterparts, yet they also sought to position their own works against those more prestigious ones, creating distinct national inflexions. Likewise, the category of gender should not obscure the existence of other relations of subordination, as underlined by Andrea in her discussion of the Tartar girl or by Perry Gethner in his account of the way in which French women writers participated in an imperial discourse. Thus, perhaps just as importantly, it is not only common patterns, authorizing strategies and thematic concerns that emerge but also the existence of the dialogue itself. For a transnational approach is not a reductionist exercise, reducing a diversity of female texts and approaches to a single common denominator. Rather, it foregrounds the multiplicity of discourses in which women engaged, while yet retaining – in some cases, quite consciously – a shared sense of participating in a common literary field. This sense of difference within unity is aptly described by the concept of 'articulation', in the sense not only of verbal utterance, but also of the concerted movement of two body parts which, while moving in separate directions, yet come together at a joint. As described by Stuart Hall, this sense of articulation is:

not that of an identity, where one structure perfectly recapitulates or reproduces or even 'expresses' another; or where each is reducible to the other. [...] The unity formed by this combination or articulation is always, necessarily, a 'complex structure', a structure in which things are related, as much through their differences as through their similarities.

This requires that the mechanisms which connect dissimilar features must be shown – since no ‘necessary correspondence’ or expressive homology can be assumed as given. It also means – since the combination is a structure (an articulated combination) and not a random association – that there will be structured relations between its parts, i.e., relations of dominance and subordination.²⁶

Understanding early modern women's writing as a form of ‘articulation’, then, means both understanding how they used their writing to ‘articulate’ different, sometimes seemingly incompatible norms – as in the case of Françoise de Maintenon, ‘articulating’ an epistolary *persona* that was both worldly *salonnière* and pious queen – and resituating their literary texts within the context of the transnational dialogue that produced them. As Bossier aptly puts it in his discussion of Maddalena Campiglia, it meant that women authors were sometimes in the situation of saying ‘yes’ and ‘no’ at the same time. Or in other words, to take up Susan Lanser's productive concept, women's writing reveals once again its fundamentally ‘double-voiced’ nature.²⁷ ‘Writing back’, in this sense, meant for these women not opposing a new, authoritative discourse to an older one, but rather bringing different discourses together, and ultimately creating a sense of gender identity that acquired its meaning not from a sense of national sameness, but transnational difference.

²⁶ Cited in Edwards B.H., “The Uses of Diaspora”, *Social Text* 19, 1 (2001) 59. Edwards' discussion, here and elsewhere, of the way in which the concept of ‘articulation’ can be applied to transnational contacts between black authors in the early twentieth century is particularly suggestive.

²⁷ Lanser S.S., *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca – London: 1992).

Selective Bibliography

- BENOIT-DUSAUSOY A. – FONTAINE G. (eds.), *Lettres Européennes. Histoire de la littérature européenne* (Paris: 1992).
- BROUARD-ARENDIS I. (ed.), *Lectrices d'Ancien Régime* (Rennes: 2003).
- CASANOVA P., *La République mondiale des Lettres* (Paris: 1999).
- DEJEAN J., *Tender Geographies. Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: 1991).
- DIJK S. van – GILLEIR A. – MONTOYA A.C., "Before NEWW (*New approaches to European Women's Writing*): Prolegomena to the Launching of an International Project", *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 27, 1 (2008) 151–157.
- EDWARDS B.H., "The Uses of Diaspora", *Social Text* 19, 1 (2001) 45–73.
- FÁBRI A., *A szép tiltott táj fele: a magyar írók története két századforduló között (1795–1905)* (Budapest: 1996).
- FUMAROLI M. (ed.), *Les premiers siècles de la République européenne des Lettres* (Paris: 2005).
- , *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (Paris: 2001).
- GILLEIR A., "'Doppelter Knoten'. Metaphorik und Geschlecht in Herders literatur- und kulturkritischem Diskurs", *Herder Jahrbuch/Herder Yearbook* 10 (2009) forthcoming.
- GOODMAN D., *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca – London: 1994).
- HUTCHEON L. – VALDÉS M.J., *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory* (New York – Oxford: 2002).
- LANSER S.S., *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca – London: 1992).
- LEERSSEN J., "Women Authors and Literary History", in Dijk S. van – Gemert L. van – Ottway S. (eds.), *Writing the History of Women's Writing. Toward an International Approach* (Amsterdam: 2001) 251–257.
- LERNER G., *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness from the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York – Oxford: 1993).
- McFADDEN M.H., *Golden Cables of Sympathy. The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism* (Lexington: 1999).
- MØLLER-JENSEN E. et al. (eds.), *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria*, 5 vols. (Copenhagen – Stockholm: 1993–1999).
- SCHENKEVELD-VAN DER DUSSEN R., "Met en zonder Lauwerkrans in an International Perspective", in Dijk S. van – Gemert L. van – Ottway S. (eds.), *Writing the History of Women's Writing. Toward an International Approach* (Amsterdam: 2001) 239–250.
- , et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans. Schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850: van Anna Bijns tot Elise van Calcar* (Amsterdam: 1997).
- SHOWALTER E., *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton: 1977).
- SPIVAK G.C., *Death of a Discipline* (New York: 2003).
- SPENDER D., *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers before Jane Austen* (London: 1986).
- VOLLENDORF L., "The Problems and Promises of Early Modern Gender Studies: The Case of Spain", in *Laberinto* (<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/laberinto/2002/vollendorf.htm>), accessed July 25, 2009.

FEMALE SPACES, FEMALE COMMUNITIES

‘TO PROMOTE GOD’S PRAISE AND HER
NEIGHBOUR’S SALVATION’.
STRATEGIES OF AUTHORSHIP AND READERSHIP
AMONG MYSTIC WOMEN IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Madeleine Jeay and Kathleen Garay

He read to her many a good book of high contemplation, and other books, such as the Bible with doctors’ commentaries on it, St Bride’s book, Hilton’s book, Bonaventura’s *Stimulus Amoris*, *Incendium Amoris* and other similar [...] Afterwards he read of a woman called Mary of Oignies, and of her manner of life, of the wonderful sweetness that she had in hearing the word of God. [...] ¹

Referring to herself in her autobiography in the third person, the fifteenth-century mystic Margery Kempe (ca.1373–ca.1478) explains how she obtained inspiration and reassurance in her own spiritual journey through the examples of other women who had undergone similar mystical crises and had recorded their experiences. Margery was an almost illiterate married woman, the mother of fourteen children, who discovered a vocation for spirituality and acquired a significant knowledge of theology thanks to the sermons she attended and her sometimes confrontational conversations with the clerics and prelates she consulted for spiritual guidance.² Among the books which were read to her by a priest over a period of seven or eight years, two in the quotation above refer to works by or about mystic women. There

¹ *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B.A. Windeatt (London: 1994) 182, 191. Walter Hilton’s spiritual writings, especially the *Scale of Perfection*, were very influential in fifteenth-century England; wrongly attributed to Saint Bonaventure, the thirteenth-century *Stimulus amoris* (*The Prick of Love*) was probably written by the Franciscan James of Milan; the *Incendium amoris* (*The Fire of Love*) by the hermit Richard Rolle is an account of his mystical experiences. For details see 191–193. The manuscript Douce 114 contains besides the *Life* of Marie of Oignies those of Elizabeth of Spaalbeck and Christina Mirabilis. On the diffusion of devotional texts among English women at the end of the Middle Ages, see Bartlett A.C., *Male Authors, Female Readers. Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca – London: 1995) 1–33.

² According to Nicholas Watson, Margery’s learning and literacy were more sophisticated than often thought. Watson N., “The Making of the *Book of Margery Kempe*”, in Olson L. – Kerby-Fulton K. (eds.), *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: 2005) 395–434, 397.

is Marie of Oignies (1177–1213), a ‘holy woman to whom God had given great grace of weeping and crying’, the beguine who became a model for other women devoted to a pious life, through the circulation of her *vita* written by James of Vitry and Thomas of Cantimpré.³ ‘St Bride’s book’ refers to the *Revelations* of Birgitta of Sweden (1303–1373) which circulated all over Europe. Founder of the Bridgittine Order,⁴ she is mentioned many times in Margery’s book, where she appears as a powerful model, perhaps because she was herself a mother who had found her way to holiness. Another model provided for Margery is Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–1231) who ‘also cried with a loud voice, as is written in her treatise’.⁵ Margery’s reading programme is similar in many respects to those of two fifteenth-century aristocratic English women: Cecily of York had books read aloud by her chaplain during the evening meal, among them Hilton’s and the Pseudo Bonaventure’s books, the *Golden Legend*, the *Lives* of Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Catherine of Siena, and the *Revelations* of Saint Birgitta of Sweden. Lady Cecile Neville also had works by Walter Hilton and by the German nun Mechtild of Hackeborn read to her.⁶

In addition to these writings related to mystic women, Margery took great inspiration from the sites associated with them which she visited on her pilgrimages and from the women she went to meet in person. The image that we get from the readings made to her and her contacts with people and places, is one of a strong virtual community of women linked by a similar form of spirituality and a vast corpus of works attached to their names. The existence of such a spiritual network, from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, leads us to reconsider the postulate that the diffusion of these works was limited.⁷

³ *Book of Margery Kempe* 205. Jacques de Vitry and Thomas de Cantimpré, *The Life of Marie d'Oignies*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1998).

⁴ Syon Abbey, the order’s English house, was founded by Henry V in 1415.

⁵ *Book of Margery Kempe* 193. The identification of this text and its author are still subjects of scholarly debate. Margery was probably referring to Elizabeth, Princess of the Hungarian royal house. Daughter of Andras II, duchess of Thuringia and mother of three, Elizabeth became a Franciscan tertiary at the age of 20, after her husband’s death, and led a life of austerity. Canonized in 1235, the many literary representations of her *Life* became sources of inspiration. See the further discussion below.

⁶ Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers* 10–12. On the reading programme of French aristocratic women, see Boulton M., “Littérature pieuse écrite par et pour les femmes au XV^e siècle” in Poirier G. (ed.), *Dix ans de recherche sur les femmes écrivains de l’Ancien Régime: influences et confluences. Mélanges offerts à Hannah Fournier* (Québec: 2008) 37–59.

⁷ Vauchez A., “Lay People’s Sanctity in Western Europe: Evolution of a Pattern (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)”, in Blumenfeld-Kosinski R. – Szell T. (eds.),

The fact that some of these Lives were composed in Latin is not a sufficient proof that their intended audience was restricted to clerics or literate sections of the population. On the contrary, the passage from Margery Kempe's *Book* shows how these writings could be accessible to uneducated lay people through a personal reading or a transposition into the vernacular made by a spiritual advisor. In addition to questions of their diffusion, several questions can be raised from this example, the most controversial being the issue of the authorship of these works. It is true that only a few examples of female authorship without male mediation can be identified for this period. At the end of the tenth century, Hroswitha of Gandersheim composed hagiographies and plays; in twelfth and thirteenth-century England, at the abbey of Barking, Mary, Constance and an anonymous nun transposed Latin saints' lives into Anglo-Norman.⁸ Beguines such as Hadewijch of Brabant and Beatrice of Nazareth wrote spiritual poetry and recorded their visions in Dutch, and the nuns of Helfta, Gertrud the Great (1256–1302) and Mechtild of Hackeborn (d.1298), noted down their visions and revelations in collaboration with the sisters of the convent. In Italy, we can include Saint Clare and possibly Angela of Foligno. At least three thirteenth-century *vitae* of saintly women can confidently be attributed to women: the *Life of Isabelle de France* by Agnes of Harcourt, the *vita* of *Douceline of Digne* by Felipa Porcelet and the biography of Beatrix of Ornacieux by Marguerite of Oingt. Another female author, Marguerite Porete, was put on trial in 1310 for her *Mirror of Simple Souls*, written in French, which circulated widely in its translations into Latin and other languages, despite the ban imposed on its diffusion.

The authorial norm, however, is the biography of a pious woman or a report of her mystical experience transcribed by her male 'secretary', her confessor or spiritual advisor, or at least mediated by him.⁹ While,

Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe (Ithaca – London: 1991) 21–31, 30. Our conclusion about the existence of such networks from the twelfth century does not concur with those of Scheepsma W. about Dutch mystic women: "Mystical Networks in the Middle Ages? On the First Women Writers in Dutch and their Literary Contacts", in Dijk S. van – Broomans P. – Meulen J.F. van der – Oostrum P. van (eds.), *I Have Heard About You'. Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlof* (Hilversum: 2004) 43–60.

⁸ MacBain W., "Anglo-Norman Women Hagiographers", in Short I. (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays* (London: 1993) 235–250.

⁹ The tradition of spiritual friendships between women and their spiritual advisors goes back as far as Augustine and Jerome: Conybeare C., "Spaces between Letters. Augustine's Correspondence with Women", in Olson – Kerby-Fulton, *Voices in Dialogue*

for most of the period between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries, the church establishment was willing to consider the possibility that women, always regarded as the weaker and more sinful sex, might be the vessels chosen to transmit the word of God, their chances of acceptance were much increased by some form of male authentication. The result is a situation of negotiation between the mystic and her amanuensis in which it is far from clear that she is submitting to his authority and control. On the delicate issue of attributing to the mystic herself the authorship of works produced in collaboration with a man who represents the clerical establishment, much has been said.¹⁰ Interpretations of this situation go from scepticism concerning the influence of the mystic on the final text to the conviction that the women's voices can be heard even through their transcription, even when it was rendered in Latin.¹¹ The evidence presented here will suggest that while ecclesiastical authorities had the final say regarding the orthodoxy of what was published by men and women alike, especially when the texts were in the vernacular, this did not preclude forms of female manipulation of clerical authority that are manifest in the vast corpus of (auto)biographies, treatises, visions, letters, poetry, bearing witness to women's involvement in the preparation of these works and of their desire to provide a teaching through their experience, in spite of the fact that the Church prohibited them from preaching.

Margery Kempe's description of her own 'reading' and receptivity can be extrapolated to both the production and dissemination of writings presenting the spiritual journeys of exceptional women from the end of the twelfth to the fifteenth century. She did not passively receive the *Lives* or testimonies that were read to her but regarded them as templates for her own spiritual progress. We can safely assume that she related the models of behaviour they described to the women who performed them, and not to the men who were responsible for the written text.

57–72 and Vessey M., "Response to Catherine Conybeare. Women of Letters?" in *ibid.* 73–96. These women were often from patrician backgrounds and were able to read and write Latin.

¹⁰ See, for example, Bilinkoff J., *Related Lives, Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450–1750* (Ithaca: 2005) especially ch. 3, "Whose *Life* is this Anyway?" 46–75.

¹¹ See the studies gathered by Chance J. (ed.), *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Gainesville: 1996), especially the article by Greenspan. See also the cases examined by Coakley J.W., *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power. Female Saints and their Male Collaborators* (New York: 2006) 45–67.

Our discussion will follow the few threads that can be retraced of the production, circulation and reception of works identified with mystic women, and consider how they took inspiration from one another. The traditional process of circulation of writings through the copying of manuscripts, raises methodological issues specific to the Middle Ages, especially when women are concerned. Not all the women who knew how to read were able to write, and for most of them their lack of training in Latin marginalized them from the highest forms of literacy.¹² Most of the evidence of the circulation and reception of works related to women's devotion comes from examples found in the *Lives* themselves, although some can also be found in testimonies from their entourages or in the information provided by the physical composition of manuscripts. The overview to be presented here represents the preliminary stage of an inquiry, requiring further research, on the networks that the pious women and their communities developed between themselves. We will suggest that these networks both facilitated and supported a distinct gynecocentric literary practice, one which made it possible for mystic women, from the twelfth century to the end of the Middle Ages, to learn from and support one another in the writing and reading of spiritual texts.

In many respects Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) can be seen as the model for subsequent writings associated with women's experiences of spirituality. While she can be considered as an author in her own right, her association with Volmar, the spiritual partner who acted as her secretary became the norm after her. The great majority of these works, especially the biographies, were the result of a partnership between the mystic woman and her mediator in the production of the written record of her spiritual journey. We will begin our study with Hildegard and her influence on the other great twelfth-century German visionary, Elizabeth of Schönau (1129–1164) and her possible impact on the beguinal movement in Belgium and the Netherlands.

As lay women, who led pious lives in urban communities without taking vows or being cloistered, the beguines knew of Hildegard. Among the best known of them, Marie of Oignies can be considered, even more than Hildegard, as an inspiration for generations of women involved in a spiritual quest. Her influence extended to Southern France, Germany, and England, as we see in Margery's

¹² Chance J., "Introduction", in Chance, *Gender and Text* 1–21.

testimony. The impact of the type of ascetic devotion described in the lives of Marie of Oignies and the other mystic women from Belgium by two preachers, James of Vitry and Thomas of Cantimpré, can also be traced in the group of nuns cloistered in the monastery of Helfta in Germany, which produced some of the most important examples of spiritual work. Another great figure, herself a model for other women, is Elisabeth of Hungary, whether or not she was the actual author of the text to which Margery refers; accounts of her life and miracles circulated widely. Finally, at the end of the Middle Ages, the visions and biography of Birgitta of Sweden were highly influential, as we have seen with Margery Kempe. We will follow the path drawn by these major figures of female spirituality in the Middle Ages in order to trace the production and reception of the works attributed to them.

Hildegard of Bingen's authorship of the important theological and visionary works attributed to her is not contested, in spite of the fact that she had to rely on her scribe Volmar.¹³ Besides the composition of liturgical music for which she is popular nowadays, she composed major works (*Scivias*, *Liber vitae meritorum* or *Book of Life's Merits*, and the *Liber divinorum operum* or *Book of Divine Works*) in which she celebrates God's creation. In her writings on the 'Nature of things' (*Liber subtilitatum*), she demonstrates a knowledge of the human body, especially of the female body, concentrating on ailments and their cures. Placed under the care of the recluse Jutta at the age of eight, as her reputation spread, she gained the attention of Bernard of Clairvaux. More revealing from the perspective of a study of women's networks, are her friendship with the young nun, Richardis von Stade, and her influence on the abbesses of convents who asked for her advice. Among the many letters she exchanged with her contemporaries, we can mention those of the abbesses of Aitwick (Oudwijk) near Utrecht and Sophie of Kitzingen who wanted to know if they could resign their responsibilities and become recluses. There is also a letter from the abbess Adelheid of Gandersheim, who had been educated by Hildegard, as well as correspondence with the Benedictine visionary, Elizabeth of Schönau.¹⁴

¹³ It is worth mentioning that she also benefited from the collaboration of nuns of her convent, particularly Richardis von Stade.

¹⁴ *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, trans. J.L. Baird – R.K. Ehrman, vol. 1 (New York: 1998–2004), vol. 2 (Oxford: 2006) and Clark A.L., *Elizabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia: 1992).

Elizabeth's ecstatic visions were first recorded by other sisters of her convent until her brother Ekbert took upon himself to play the role of her editor and translator from German into Latin.¹⁵ He transposed her oral descriptions into written records in order to publicize them, probably suppressing potentially questionable visions in his effort to legitimize them. There are indications that Elizabeth kept describing her visions to some sisters who wrote them down.¹⁶ Her revelations, first announced in his preaching by Hildelin, the abbot of the monastery, have been transmitted in at least 145 manuscripts.¹⁷ In her *Liber viarum Dei* (*Book of the Ways of God*) she acknowledges the role played by Hildegard of Bingen in her self-awareness as agent in the production of her texts, in the affirmation of her own involvement in the creation of a book:

On a certain day while I was in a trance, [the angel] had led me as if to a meadow in which a tent was pitched and we went into it. And he showed me a great pile of books kept there and said: 'Do you see those books? All of these are still to be dictated before the judgment day'. Then, raising one from the pile he said: 'This is the *Book of the Ways of God* which is to be revealed through you after you have visited sister Hildegard and listened to her'. And indeed it began to be fulfilled in this way immediately after I returned from her.¹⁸

Another testimony of this identification of a mystic woman with the books written under her name can be found in the codex 1942 of the Biblioteca Governativa in Lucca, the only illuminated manuscript of Hildegard's last work, the *Liber divinorum operum*. In the margin of the ten miniatures, we can see an image of the visionary represented transcribing her experience.¹⁹ This could be one of the first representations of a woman as an author, portrayed with the same dignity as the evangelists or the biblical prophets.²⁰ As well as this visual testimony

¹⁵ On Ekbert's role, see Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power* 25–44.

¹⁶ Clark, *Elizabeth of Schönau* 52–53, and Clark A.L., "Holy Woman or Unworthy Vessel? The Representations of Elisabeth of Schönau", in Mooney C.M. (ed.), *Gendered Voices. Medieval Saints and their Interpreters* (Philadelphia: 1999) 35–51, in which she explains the interactions between brother and sister.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 35.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 43.

¹⁹ See a reproduction on www.hildegard-society.org/bibliography.html, accessed August 15, 2009.

²⁰ Sansy D., "Iconographie de la prophétie. L'image d'Hildegarde de Bingen dans le *Liber divinorum operum*", in Vauchez A. (ed.), *Les textes prophétiques et la prophétie en Occident (XII^e–XVI^e siècle)* (Rome: 1990) 405–416, 406.

of authorship, there is the *Vita St. Hildegardis*, which has been called the first ‘autohagiography’ of the Middle Ages.²¹ After the death of Volmar in 1173, his successor Gottfried of Disibodenberg prepared the first book of Hildegard’s *vita* with the contribution of Theodoric of Echternach for the prologue and the second and third chapters.²² The core of the text, however, is a first person account by Hildegard herself of events of her life and her visions, prepared for inclusion in the biography planned by Volmar and used by his successors. The resulting text is a polyphony of voices, with Hildegard representing herself as a prophet, the ‘Sybil of the Rhine’, Gottfried painting her as the aristocratic foundress and abbess of the Rupertsberg monastery, and Theodoric responsible for the final form and developing a new model of sanctity. This model offers a new spiritual avenue for women, the bridal mysticism based on the *imitatio Christi* that will define, with the biographies of saintly women by James of Vitry and Thomas of Cantimpré, the medieval representation of feminine spirituality.

In this new definition, we must consider the role played by Guibert of Gembloux who exchanged letters with Hildegard and visited her twice.²³ From the time of his second visit, in 1177, he acted as her secretary until her death and finally undertook a biography which remained unfinished because of his duties as abbot of the abbeys of Florennes and Gembloux, near Namur in Belgium. His *Vita S. Hildegardis* ends in 1141, when Hildegard’s public life begins. By the contacts he maintained with the monks of Villers who revered Hildegard, Guibert played an important role in establishing the link between the visionary and the spiritual climate in Belgium especially among the beguines.²⁴ He contributed to the legitimization of the devotion of the *mulieres sanctae*, celebrated by James of Vitry, Thomas de Cantimpré

²¹ Newman B., “Hildegard and her Hagiographers. The Remaking of Female Sainthood”, in Mooney, *Gendered Voices* 16–34, 16. This *vita* was part of a considerable effort of publication of Hildegard’s works by her daughters and her friends to secure her canonization (*ibid.* 30).

²² See the introduction by Hugh Feiss of his translation of Gottfried of Disibodenberg and Theodoric of Echternach, *The Life of Saintly Hildegard*, trans. H. Feiss (Toronto: 1996) 6–12, and details of the composition in Newman, “Hildegard and her Hagiographers” 17–18.

²³ *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen* 3. On the relationship between Guibert and Hildegard, see Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power*.

²⁴ McDonnell E.W., *The Beguines and the Beghards in Medieval Culture. With Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene* (New Brunswick: 1954) 281–286.

and their other biographers. It is clear that, from the abbey of Villers, a center for the pastoral care of nuns, the *Vita S. Hildegardis* 'influenced the new wave of mystical hagiography from the Low Countries'.²⁵

With the women, nuns or beguines, known through their biographies composed by such prominent figures such as Vitry and Cantimpré, the question of authorship becomes more complex than it seems at first. It cannot be denied that Jacques's biography of Marie of Oignies and Thomas's *Lives* of Christina the Mirabilis, Lutgard of Aywières and Margaret of Ypres, written in Latin, must be attributed to the two Dominicans, both of whom were determined to promote the spirituality of these women and their communities.²⁶ It would be wrong, however, to imagine that the men had total control over a narrative that, especially in the case of Marie of Oignies, betrays the negotiations that must have occurred between the beguine and the biographer. On several occasions in her *Vita*, Jacques admits that she does not conform to the model of restrained behaviour he considered suitable for the new type of female devotion he was advocating through the example of her sainthood. He had to reprimand her because of her excessive contrition for small sins, not worthy of consideration, and was uncomfortable with her lack of moderation in her fasting and mortifications.²⁷ While the first impulse for writing Marie's *Life* came from Fulk, Bishop of Toulouse, in order to promote examples of lay devotion that would counterbalance the heretic beliefs of the Cathars, Jacques found personal challenges, as well as rewards, in his relationship with Marie. As Thomas de Cantimpré recounts at the beginning of his addition to the *Life*, Jacques had been attracted to Oignies, where he became a regular canon, by Marie's renown:

When Master Jacques de Vitry, who later became bishop of Acre and now is bishop of Tusculanum and a cardinal of the Roman see, heard in Paris, France, the name of the blessed handmaid of Christ, Marie

²⁵ Newman, "Hildegard and her Hagiographers" 32. About Hildegard's influence in fourteenth and fifteenth-century England and the diffusion of Hildegardiana, see Kerby-Fulton K., *Books under Suspicion. Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame: 2006) 188–204.

²⁶ Christina the Mirabilis: 1150–1224; Lutgard of Aywières: 1182–1246; Margaret of Ypres: 1182–1246.

²⁷ Jacques de Vitry, *The Life of Marie d'Oignies*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1998) 60–61, 110; Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power* 68–88.

d'Oignies, he abandoned his theological studies in which he was immoderately interested and came to Oignies where she had recently gone.²⁸

Thomas's testimony, whether factually accurate or not, reveals the perception of the beguine's prestige by an important theologian, who was to become a powerful prelate. The indications that she acted as his mentor are explicit, for example when she advised him when he began to preach.²⁹ If we rely on both biographers, Marie developed her theological culture and mastered the art of preaching, with her frequent hearing of sermons and her devotion to preachers and 'faithful pastors of souls'.³⁰ Again when Thomas insists that by her 'prayers and special merits', Jacques 'reached in a short time such a pre-eminence in preaching that scarcely any mortal equalled him', we are less interested in the accuracy of the fact than in the image he constructs of Marie and her influence.³¹

Marie's role cannot be understood if we isolate her from the group of beguines, recluses, and nuns representing a new genre of female spirituality, women who, in order not to risk being considered as heretics, had to be legitimized in their choice of a life out of the cloister.³² From the details in the Belgian beguines' biographies, it is possible to reconstitute the sort of spiritual network that existed between these exceptional figures, who are presented as examples to be admired. Marie herself played a role in Lutgard of Aywières's vocation, prophesying about her miracles.³³ Lutgard, in turn, had been previously comforted in her choice of a cloistered life in the Cistercian monastery of Aywières by the words of Christina Mirabilis.³⁴ Christina herself, after spectacular manifestations of her spiritual gifts described in

²⁸ Thomas de Cantimpré, *The Supplement to Jacques de Vitry's Life of Marie d'Oignies*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1998) 218.

²⁹ It is worth noting that James of Vitry found another mentor in Christina of Stommeln and that Marie was also considered as his mentor by John of Nivelles: McDonnell, *The Beguines and the Beghards* 27, 40.

³⁰ Jacques de Vitry, *Life of Marie d'Oignies* 112.

³¹ His last chapter of her biography is dedicated to her afterlife impact on James of Vitry: she appeared to him in visions and continued to advise him (Thomas de Cantimpré, *Supplement* 244–255).

³² Neil C., "The Origins of the Beguines", in Bennett J.M. et al. (eds.), *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (Chicago – London: 1989) 240–260, 254–256 about her predecessors, the *Lives* of Rycwer, who entered the abbey of Prémontré in 1121, and the blessed Oda of Rivreulle (1131–1158).

³³ Thomas de Cantimpré, *The Life of Lutgard of Aywières*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1991) 53.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 43.

detail in her *Life* by Thomas de Cantimpré, stayed for nine years with the anchoress Yvette of Huy (1158–1228).³⁵ Yvette's *Life* by Hugh of Floreffe is one of the great biographies, along with Thomas de Cantimpré's *Life* of Lutgard, related to Cistercian theology in the diocese of Liège.³⁶

Among these *vitae*, the anonymous one of Juliana of Mont Cornillon is an important witness to the impact of the mystic, primarily because her name is attached to the 'Feast of the Sacrament', or 'Corpus Christi'.³⁷ Its influence is clear in spite of the fact that only seven manuscripts have been traced and three of these have subsequently been lost. The author worked from the recollections of John of Lausanne, Juliana's friend and confessor, and from a fragmentary *Life* written in Walloon by Eve of St. Martin.³⁸ A protégée of Juliana, Eve continued her efforts to popularize the *Corpus Christi* feast and became an anchoress. The anonymous *vitae* of Ida of Nivelles, Ida of Lewis and Ida of Louvain demonstrate the same devotion to Christ's Passion, presented by their biographers in similar narratives. Links can be traced between some of these women. Ida of Nivelles developed a close friendship with Beatrice of Nazareth at the Cistercian community of La Ramée where she had been sent to learn how to write manuscripts.³⁹ Ida, who had spent several years with the beguines in Nivelles, was more spiritually advanced and took her under her wing. Beatrice's biographer, presumably Goswin of Villers, knew Ida's *vita* and makes several references to it. Another important figure who appears to have belonged to Beatrice's spiritual network was Lutgard of Aywières, whose *vita* was also probably known to Beatrice's biographer.

As we have seen with Margery Kempe's testimony, the diffusion of the biographies of these women extended their network beyond the areas of Nivelles and Liège. Marie of Oignies's *vita* survives in one manuscript in English, one in French and 26 manuscripts in Latin. A version of her *Life* was copied with the biography of the thirteenth-

³⁵ Thomas de Cantimpré, *The Life of Christina the Astonishing*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1999).

³⁶ Hugh of Floreffe, *The Life of Yvette of Huy*, trans. J.A. McNamara (Toronto: 1999).

³⁷ *The Life of Juliana of Mont Cornillon*, trans. B. Newman (Toronto: 1988).

³⁸ Goodich M., *Miracles and Wonders. The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150–1350* (Aldershot – Burlington: 2007) 6.

³⁹ *The Life of Beatrice of Nazareth, 1200–1268*, trans. R. deGanck (Kalamazoo: 1991) xvii.

century German mystic Lukarde of Oberweimar.⁴⁰ Christina Mirabilis's *vita* circulated in twelve Latin manuscripts, one in English and three in Dutch.⁴¹ However, the written word was not the only channel of their influence; we also have evidence that their reputations travelled through personal contacts. We know, for example, that James of Vitry met Saint Francis of Assisi in 1216, two years after Marie's death, an encounter that must have acquainted the founder of the Franciscans with the kind of spirituality which had developed in Belgium.⁴² A more specific link between the beguines and Franciscan spirituality can be traced with the Provençal visionary Douceline of Digne (1215–1274). Her brother Hugh was a famous Franciscan preacher who had spent time in Paris around 1240, before her decision to settle a group of beguines in Hyères. According to her *vita*:

at that time, there was no house of beguines, and no one had heard of them in Provence. [...] The holy mother was the first beguine in Provence and she was the origin of all those who took that name.⁴³

Clearly, Douceline's ambition was to lead, with the guidance of her brother, a movement of pious women, in her case related to the Spiritual Franciscans, similar to the groups in Northern France and Belgium that he must have described to her after his stay in Paris. Groups of lay women who called themselves beguines are reported in Provence and Languedoc, especially around a figure like Peter-John Olivi, until the beginning of the fourteenth century when Pope John XXII prohibited their activities and they were prosecuted by the Inquisition. The houses instituted by Douceline in Hyères and Marseilles were the first ones in Southern France and foundations were also established under the patronage of Saint Louis in Paris, Rouen and near Amiens. The French communities follow the Flemish model: Louis IX had visited the beguines of Ghent in 1228. Flemish cloth merchants contributed to the beguinage founded in Orléans, and the community of Corbie in Picardy sheltered Saint Colette before she became a recluse and the reformer of the Poor Clares.⁴⁴ All these interactions show that we

⁴⁰ Manuscript of Berlin, SB Preussischer Kulturbesitz, cod. Theol. Oct. 188, Teil II, 14th century.

⁴¹ Newman, "Hildegard and her Hagiographers" 32.

⁴² McDonnell, *The Beguines and the Beghards* 434.

⁴³ *The Life of Saint Douceline Beguine of Provence*, trans. K. Garay – M. Jeay (Woodbridge: 2001) 29, 31.

⁴⁴ On these links, see McDonnell, *The Beguines and the Beghards* 224–232.

should look beyond the mere attestation of written evidence preserved in libraries for evidence of networks of communities of women inspired by their leading figures. Their impact appears to have depended on informal verbal exchanges as well as on more formal readings and commentaries on the works related to these spiritual models. Again, in this kind of situation, the issue of authorship must take into account a mode of reception in which the woman mystic is presumably more important than the cleric who narrated her story or contributed to the publication of her experiences.

Germany is another area where the writings attached to pious women from Belgium and the Netherlands were influential. Soon after its foundation in 1228, the Cistercian monastery of Helfta became an important center of spirituality and mysticism under the guidance of its abbess Gertrud of Hackeborn and the renown acquired by its nuns, especially Gertrud the Great, Mechtild of Hackeborn, and Mechtild of Magdeburg (1210–ca.1285), all three prolific writers. The community was a place of learning with the teaching of Latin and the scholarly curriculum typical of the thirteenth century including the seven liberal arts.⁴⁵ The nuns, busy collecting, copying and illustrating manuscripts, knew the works of major theologians such as Gregory the Great, Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugh of Saint-Victor.⁴⁶ The atmosphere was one of intellectual collaboration, so that it is often difficult to attribute specific names to some of the important works produced at Helfta. Under the title of *The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness*, we have a composite text, part hagiography written by a nun of the convent, part autobiography, and account of her visions by Gertrud the Great, of which Books Three to Five were compiled under her direction and the supervision of another nun.⁴⁷ The *Book of Special Grace* which records the visions and revelations received by Mechtild of Hackeborn, the choir mistress of the convent, renowned for her beautiful voice, is the result of their compilation in Latin by two sisters, one of them being Gertrud the Great, who had discussed their respective mystical experiences with Mechtild. In this context of spiritual and intellectual

⁴⁵ See Barratt A., "Introduction", *The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness* vol. 1–2 (Kalamazoo: 1991) 11–15, 11–12.

⁴⁶ Walker Bynum C., "Women Mystics in the Thirteenth Century: The Case of the Nuns of Helfta", in *Jesus as Mother. Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: 1982) 170–262, 176.

⁴⁷ Barratt, "Introduction", Book Three, *The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness* 10–12. Gertrud the Great also wrote down her *Spiritual Exercises*.

friendship, Gertrud was aware of the need to teach the generations of sisters to come and also readers outside the convent. According to her sister biographer:

She also devoted a good deal of effort to collecting and writing down everything which she thought might sometime be of use to anyone [...] Where she knew that there was a special shortage of the sacred books, she willingly did what she could to get hold of the necessary copies [...] If she found anything useful in holy Scripture which seemed hard for the less intelligent to understand, she would alter the Latin and rewrite it in a more straightforward style, so that it would be more useful to those who read it. She spent her whole life in this way, from early morning until night, sometimes in summarizing passages, sometimes in commenting on difficulties in her desire to promote God's praise and her neighbour's salvation.⁴⁸

However Gertrud's works, untranslated from Latin, did not have the same impact as the poetry and spiritual texts written in Middle High German by Mechtild of Magdeburg. Mechtild began writing her *Flowing Light of the Godhead* before joining Helfta, when she was a beguine in Magdeburg.⁴⁹ Urged by her confessor, the Dominican Heinrich of Halle, to note down her mystical experiences, she wrote six books, adding a seventh one when she retreated to Helfta around 1270. Heinrich of Halle, who may have edited the first books, died before Mechtild with the consequence that he did not influence the last one which she dictated to the nuns because of her blindness. Regarding the earlier books 'there is now prevailing agreement that Heinrich let Mechtild's text speak for itself'.⁵⁰ The similarity of themes strongly suggests exchanges between her group of beguines in Magdeburg and those from Brabant.⁵¹ Another indication of a possible link can be found in Gertrud the Great's second book of her *Herald of God's Loving-Kindness*, with the importance given to the devotion to the Sacred Heart. As we have seen, the love for the heart of Jesus and passion for its wounds also played an important role in the experiences of the

⁴⁸ *The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness*, Book One 50, 57. On Gertrud's self-awareness as a writer, see Barratt, "Introduction" to Book Three 10.

⁴⁹ Mechtild of Magdeburg, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, trans. F. Tobin (New York: 1998). Poor S.S., *Mechtild of Magdeburg and Her Book. Gender and the Making of Textual Authority* (Philadelphia: 2004).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 6–7 on the discussions about the extent of Henry's intervention and the fact that Mechtild participated in the editing process.

⁵¹ Mechtild de Magdebourg, *La lumière fluente de la Divinité*, trans. W. Verlaquet (Grenoble: 2001) 10: these exchanges went as far as southern Germany and Bohemia.

Flemish visionaries, particularly Lutgard of Aywières and Beatrice of Nazareth.⁵²

After Mechtild's death, her first six books were translated into Latin, omitting some of her criticism of the clergy and erotic imagery. It was through the original vernacular, however, that her work reached the fourteenth-century mystic Margaret Ebner (1210–ca.1285), a Dominican nun at the monastery of Maria Medingen near Dillingen in Swabia. Margaret's spiritual advisor and friend, Henry of Nördlingen, active among the mystical group of 'Friends of God' in Basel, introduced her to Mechtild's writings.⁵³ As a priest and confessor, he was in contact with nuns and the eminent Dominican friars John Tauler and Henry Suso. For his circle, he contributed to the adaptation of Mechtild's text into Middle High German.⁵⁴ He urged Margaret to record her *Revelations*, and thanks to his friendship with her, we have the correspondence they exchanged. She began writing in 1344, sometimes dictating to Elsbeth of Scheppach, who would become prioress of the monastery.⁵⁵ Just as at Helfta, an important activity of the monastery was the copying of manuscripts, some of them still preserved in Maria Medingen written by Margaret's hand, and the acquisition of scholarly texts. The twenty-year friendship between Henry of Nördlingen and Margaret Ebner was as important for the priest as for the mystic: he got from this connection the authority he needed to represent the Friends of God in Upper Germany.⁵⁶ In return he connected her with the spiritual writings of the 'Friends of God'. *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, an important source for this group, thanks to the adaptation in Middle High German that Henry had supervised, is also a constant reference in his correspondence with Margaret as well as in her *Revelations*. Influenced by Mechtild's style and the account of her mystical experience, Henry quotes her in his letters to reassure Margaret about what she could not understand concerning her own manifestations of God's grace.⁵⁷ The impact of the *Flowing Light* on Margaret's

⁵² Barratt, "Introduction" to Book One, *The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness* 20.

⁵³ *Margaret Ebner. Major Works*, intr. Schmidt M. – Hindsley L.P. (New York: 1993) 27–58; Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power* 149–169. The expression 'chosen friends of God' can be found in Mechtild's *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*: see *Margaret Ebner. Major Works* 28.

⁵⁴ Tobin, "Introduction", *Flowing Light of the Godhead* 8.

⁵⁵ *Margaret Ebner. Major Works* 15.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 29.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 33–39, 46–47.

Revelations is manifest in her Passion mysticism, her compassion for Christ's wounds. If the *Flowing Light* Latin translation, the *Lux divinitatis*, was directed to a male readership, the vernacular version was meant to be shared among groups of women. Margaret of the Golden Ring, a member of the 'Friends of God', bequeathed its manuscript to beguines living in Einsiedeln near Zurich. In a foreshadowing of the modern lending library, each house of women was to keep the book for one month and then pass it along to another community.⁵⁸

Returning to Margery Kempe's account of her spiritual role models, we find that her reference to Elizabeth of Hungary, like the one to Marie of Oignies, is primarily concerned with her public, disruptive behaviour. Just as she draws validation from Marie's 'plenteous tears', and finds that Marie, like Margery herself, could not prevent 'her weeping, her sobbing nor her crying' from disrupting religious services, so she records that 'Elizabeth of Hungary cried with loud voice, as is written in her treatise'. As we have earlier indicated, both the identity of this Elizabeth of Hungary and the treatise have been the subjects of vigorous scholarly debate. The first modern editor of Margery's book, Hope Emily Allen, assumed the reference to be to Elizabeth of Hungary and Thuringia⁵⁹ but this identification has been called into question, first by Alexandra Barratt⁶⁰ and then by the editor of the two Middle English translations of Elizabeth of Hungary's *Revelations*, Sarah McNamer.⁶¹ Both have suggested firstly, that the text to which Margery refers was probably either the Latin 'original'⁶² or a Middle English version of what was to become the first English text by a female visionary to appear in print, published as *The Reuelacions of Saynt Elysabeth the Kynges Daughter of Hungarye* by Wynkyn de

⁵⁸ Poor, *Mechtild of Magdeburg and Her Book* 89–95. In the sixteenth century, a Middle High German manuscript adapted from Heinrich of Nördlingen's 1345 translation also includes Mechtild's writings with those of Elizabeth of Schönau; at the same time we see the emergence of a Latin tradition of compilations centered around the authorship of holy women (*ibid.* 173–178).

⁵⁹ *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. S.B. Meech – H.E. Allen., vol. 1 (London – New York: 1940, 1961) 324, n. 154, 13–14. The note is signed by Allen.

⁶⁰ Barratt A., "The Revelations of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary: Problems of Attribution", *The Library*, Sixth Series 14 (1992) 1–11.

⁶¹ McNamer S., *The Two Middle English Translations of the Revelations of St. Elizabeth of Hungary* (Heidelberg: 1996).

⁶² Barratt suggests that the Latin versions may, in turn, have derived from a non-Romance vernacular. "The Revelations" 5–6.

Worde between 1491 and 1494⁶³ and reissued by the same publisher in 1500. Secondly, both Barratt and McNamer also reject a connection between this text and Elizabeth of Thuringia and suggest her great niece, the Dominican nun Elizabeth of Töess (ca.1294–1336), as the more likely candidate for authorship.⁶⁴ Roger Ellis, who is unconvinced about a possible link with Elizabeth of Töess, agrees that this manuscript has a good claim to be the text to which Margery was referring.⁶⁵ Regardless of whether or not this was indeed the ‘tretyss’ in question, this text, describing a series of thirteen mystic visions received by a certain ‘Saint Elizabeth’, circulated widely in both Latin and vernacular manuscript versions; as well as two Middle English and twelve Latin versions, McNamer records French, Latin, Spanish and Catalan translations.⁶⁶

Complicating Margery’s murky reference to a treatise of Elizabeth of Hungary still further is Hope Emily Allen’s apparent identification of the text in question as James of Vitry’s *vita* of Elizabeth of Thuringia.⁶⁷ There is no evidence that Vitry ever composed such a *vita*⁶⁸ and Ellis, citing an exchange with Sarah McNamer, suggests that Allen may have meant to refer to James of Voragine, the author of

⁶³ The revised STC assigns the date as [1492?]. Jackson W.A. – Ferguson F.S. – Pantzer K.F., *A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640*. 2nd edition, 3 vols. (London: 1976–1991) no. 24766.

⁶⁴ McNamer states that, among the candidates for Elizabeth’s *tretyss*, ‘it can now be identified with confidence as a copy of the *Revelations*’. *Revelations of St. Elizabeth of Hungary* 45. She also indicates that ‘Hope Allen accepts that the *tretyss* is a copy of the *Revelations*; see Meech and Allen 1940: 224’. We presume the page reference is a misprint for the notes on 324 but here Allen’s note on the *tretyss* is less clear than McNamer suggests. Allen first cites Vitry’s (*sic*) *Life* in the *Legenda Aurea*, then the Middle English verse version by Bokenham and only thirdly the Oliger edition of the *Meditations of Saint Elizabeth* ‘which have probably otherwise influenced Margery’. (*Book of Margery Kempe*, vol. 1, 324, n. 154/13).

⁶⁵ Ellis R., ‘Margery Kempe’s Scribe and the Miraculous Books’, in Phillips H. (ed.), *Langland, the Mystics and the Medieval English Religious Tradition* (Cambridge: 1990) 161–175, 167.

⁶⁶ McNamer 17–8 also records a Norfolk influence evident in the language of the Middle English manuscript version. *Ibid.* 16. However, this text nowhere implies that the ‘seynt Elizabeth’ concerned was the daughter of the king of Hungary.

⁶⁷ *Book of Margery Kempe* vol. 1 324, n.154/13. The note begins: ‘In Cardinal de Vitry’s *Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, her gift of tears is described in a long affecting passage (*Legenda Aurea*, 761 sq.)’.

⁶⁸ It is not mentioned, for example, in the most comprehensive published bibliography of Elizabeth: Imre B., *Szent Erzsébet Irodalma* (Budapest: 1907).

The Golden Legend, written about 1260.⁶⁹ Our own research suggests that Voragine's *vita* of St. Elizabeth, included in his *Golden Legend* collection, an account which clearly presents the life of Elizabeth of Thuringia, may indeed be the treatise to which Margery refers. In this widely and enduringly popular compilation of more than a hundred saints' lives,⁷⁰ Elizabeth⁷¹ is the only near-contemporary woman to be included. That her *Golden Legend vita* was known, and also that it was attributed to Voragine in East Anglia during the fourteenth century is conclusively demonstrated by its incorporation into Osbern Bokenham's *A Legend of Holy Women*. In a retelling that retains much of Voragine's original, Bokenham credits his source in the opening lines of his Prologue:

In the year of grace 1231 (as Voragine says in his *Golden Legend*), on November 19th [...] there passed out of this world Saint Elizabeth, daughter to the king of Hungary and wife to Landgrave, prince of Thuringia. Her life it is my wish to declare in English, however barren my speech.⁷²

Discussing the possible candidates for Margery's 'Elizabeth of Hungary' text, Roger Ellis suggests that the *Golden Legend vita* was 'known in East Anglia' because of Bokenham's translation.⁷³ Bokenham lived at Clare Priory in Suffolk, just 50 miles from Margery's home in Lynn. However, because his unique manuscript was copied and presumably completed in 1447, this work is too late to be Margery's *tretyz*.⁷⁴ The original *Golden Legend* text was certainly circulating in England; Delany, the editor of Bokenham's *Legend*, refers to an earlier compilation, translated from a French version of *Legenda Aurea*, called *Gilte Legende*, made before 1438.⁷⁵

In the context of female readership, we should note that Bokenham's inclusion of Elizabeth's life in his collection was at the request

⁶⁹ Ellis R., "Margery Kempe's Scribe and the Miraculous Books" 175.

⁷⁰ There are approximately 900 extant manuscripts and the work was the most often reprinted book between 1470 and 1530: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend> (consulted January 12, 2009).

⁷¹ Chapter 168 in the *Golden Legend*.

⁷² Bokenham O., *A Legend of Holy Women*, trans. S. Delany (Notre Dame – London: 1992) 175.

⁷³ Ellis, "Margery Kempe's Scribe and the Miraculous Books" 164.

⁷⁴ Delany, "Introduction", *A Legend of Holy Women* ix. Margery appears to have still been alive in 1438; she likely died between 1438 and 1440.

⁷⁵ Delany, "Introduction", *A Legend of Holy Women* xiv.

of a noble female patron, perhaps a namesake of the saint, Elizabeth Vere, Countess of Oxford. At the end of the *vita* Bokenham invokes the saint's aid for his patron:

Finally, lady, attend to the true intent of her who particularly commanded me to compose your legend and who loves you affectionately in her heart. I mean Dame Elizabeth Vere. Purchase her a charter of pardon, and when she shall pass from this outlawry, bring her to the contemplation of God. Amen and thank you Jesus.⁷⁶

Unlike the thirteenth-century Latin *vitae* by Cæsarius of Heisterbach⁷⁷ and Dietrich of Apolda⁷⁸ or the brief *Life* written by Elizabeth's own confessor, Conrad of Marburg, in support of her canonization, Voragine's *Golden Legend* account presents the mystic side of Elizabeth's actively charitable life, showing her as a visionary, possessed of the spiritual 'gift of tears'. He reports:

In order to make her prayers a rich sacrifice to God, Elizabeth often sprinkled them with a profusion of tears, but she shed her tears happily and without any unseemly change of countenance, weeping with sorrow and rejoicing at the sorrow [...] ⁷⁹

Voragine also tells of Elizabeth's visions:

She often had visions of heaven in the course of her prayer and contemplation. One day, in the holy season of Lent she was in church and her eyes fixed intently on the altar, as if she were gazing at the very presence of God [...] When she got home [...] such joyousness swept over her face that she burst out laughing. Then, after she had for some time been filled with joy by this vision, suddenly she was weeping.⁸⁰

It is surely these elements of Elizabeth's legend which appealed to Margery; not only was the subject of this *trebys* a queen, and therefore all but immune from popular criticism, a wife and mother like Margery, but also one who experienced heavenly visions. While we do not find direct confirmation of Margery's assertion that Elizabeth 'cried with a

⁷⁶ Bokenham, *A Legend of Holy Women* 195.

⁷⁷ Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Schriften über die hl. Elisabeth von Thüringen*, ed. A. Huyskens, *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 86 (1908).

⁷⁸ Dietrich of Apolda, *Die Vita der heiligen Elisabeth des Dietrich von Apolda*, ed. M. Renner (Marburg: 1993).

⁷⁹ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend; Readings on the Saints*, trans. W.G. Ryan, vol. 2 (Princeton: 1993) 304.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 310.

loud voice',⁸¹ Voragine reports that she shed tears and, albeit in a less spectacular fashion than Margery, behaved in surprising ways, disrupting the sacred space. It seems likely that this visionary and emotional element of Elizabeth's spirituality, presented in the *Golden Legend*, may have had as its source another text 'authored' by women. The *Libellus* of Elizabeth's four serving women,⁸² an account assembled as part of the evidence presented for her canonization in the years immediately following her death, appears to be an almost verbatim transcription of the women's evidence. It is here we find almost the exact words used above by Voragine, and subsequently adapted by Bokenham:

On a certain day during Lent kneeling, leaning against the wall, for a long time she had her eyes fixed on the altar [...] and after some time she began to laugh sweetly, with an utterly cheerful face. However, after much time, she shed copious tears from her closed eyes.⁸³

The need to assemble the most reliable evidence for the canonization initiative allows the voices of the lowly serving women to be heard and their composite *vita* was not only incorporated in the dossier sent to the Pope but was destined to become part of one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages and the many translations and adaptations which sprang from it. As we have seen in the case of Margery, Elizabeth's life continued to resonate and provide a role model for women of the period. The list includes Isabelle of Navarre (1242–1271) and Elizabeth's namesake and great niece, Elizabeth (Isabel) of Portugal (1271–1336). Isabelle, daughter of King Louis IX and wife of Thibaut of Champagne, King of Navarre, appears to have requested an account of Elizabeth's life from the poet Rutebeuf, who dedicates his poem to her.⁸⁴ Like Elizabeth of Hungary, she became a Franciscan tertiary following the death of her husband in 1270. The younger

⁸¹ *The Book of Margery Kempe* 193.

⁸² *Der Sog. Libellus de dictis quatuor ancillarum s. Elisabeth confectus*, ed. A. Huyskens (Kempten – Munich: 1911). The women's testimony is also included in *Quellenstudien zur Geschichte der hl. Elisabeth Landgräfin von Thüringen*, ed. A. Huyskens (Marburg: 1908).

⁸³ *Der Sog. Libellus de dictis quatuor ancillarum* 35–36: 'Quandam vero die in quadragesima genibus flexis acclinata est parieti diutissime oculos habens defixos ad altare [...] et tandem cepit dulciter ridere in magna vultus hilaritate. Post magnam autem horam clausis oculis emisit lacrimas infinitas [...]' (our translation). Compare Bokenham, *A Legend of Holy Women* 191–192.

⁸⁴ Cazelles B., *The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: 1991) 152. Part of the 'A' text of the poem is translated 153–169.

Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, devoted herself to providing hospitality for pilgrims and the poor. Following the death of her husband, Diniz, in 1325, she also retired to a small house near the monastery she had founded, became a Franciscan tertiary, and lived out her life in poverty.⁸⁵ Clearly Elizabeth of Hungary, like Marie of Oignies, was one of the 'patron saints' of the beguines and the other lay women who emulated them.⁸⁶ Indeed, the testimony of the women in the *Libellus* concerning Elizabeth's death, provides a remarkable echo of Marie's own demise. 'When her last hour was approaching', Vitry records, Marie 'began to sing I know not what in a low voice for a very long time' while Voragine, incorporating the women's account into the *Golden Legend*, says of Elizabeth:

She was brought low with fever and lay with her face turned toward the wall, and those who stood around her heard her humming a sweet melody. When one of her maids asked her what this meant, she answered: 'A little bird perched between me and the wall, and sang so sweetly that I too had to sing'.⁸⁷

As Margery Kempe's testimony also reveals, the accounts of the visions of Birgitta of Sweden became so widely read that they had a significant impact on popular piety. She was considered a great prophetess, another sibyl. This rich patrician and mother of eight children took the transcription of her revelations extremely seriously and worked closely with the four scribes who translated and edited her texts. Her first amanuensis was her confessor, Matthias, canon of Linköping cathedral. Then Peter, Prior of Alvastra, the convent where she retired after her husband's death, and another Peter, Prior of Skänninge helped her. The last supervisor of the editing of her revelations was Alfonso of Jaen, whom she had met while on pilgrimage and who shared the last part of her life in Rome.⁸⁸ Around seven hundred visions and messages from God were recorded, compiled in

⁸⁵ Capes F., "St. Elizabeth of Portugal", *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 5 (New York: 1909), online: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05391a.htm>. Farmer D.H., "Elizabeth of Portugal", *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: 2003), online: <http://www.oxfordreference.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t100.e543>, both consulted January 12, 2009.

⁸⁶ Wiethaus U., "The Death Song of Marie d'Oignies: Mystical Sound and Hagiographical Politics in Medieval Lorraine", in Kittell E.E. – Suydam M.A. (eds.), *The Texture of Society: Medieval Women in the Southern Low Countries* (New York: 2004) 168.

⁸⁷ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend* 312.

⁸⁸ While in Rome she is supposed to have influenced Catherine of Siena.

1377 in the *Liber celestis revelaciones*, usually called *Revelaciones*. The *Liber celestis imperatoris ad reges* and the *Tractatus de summis pontificibus*, with visions about political and clerical leaders, were published in 1380. The collection, entitled *Extravagantes*, reports visions she had in Sweden before she went to Rome. Her other works include her *Rule* for the Bridgettine Order she founded and liturgical writings, the *Sermo angelicus* as well as prayers and songs.⁸⁹ She took great care to report her visions accurately, noting them down in Swedish and supervising their translation: the scribes had to retranslate from Latin to Swedish orally for her so that she could check the accuracy of their writing. In her *Extravagantes*, she describes the problems she had finding the right words to transmit the messages from God.⁹⁰

The circulation of Birgitta's writings both in manuscripts and editions, in Latin or in translations, is an incontestable proof of their popularity. The first printed publications appeared in 1491 in Middle Dutch at Antwerp, and in Latin in 1492 at Lübeck. Germany was a center for the diffusion of Bridgettine texts in Germany, parallel to the foundation of Bridgettine monasteries.⁹¹ In England the *Revelations* arrived in the 1380s and became favourite reading for an increasing audience of lay as well as religious people.⁹² The episode of her spiritual pregnancy suggests, thanks to Brigittta's influence, continuity between Marie of Oignies and the mystics of the end of the

⁸⁹ On the importance of books for Birgitta, and the reception of her works at Syon abbey, see Krug R., "Reading at Syon Abbey", in *Reading Families. Women's Literate Practice in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca – London: 2002) 153–206 and Schirmer E., "Reading Lessons at Syon Abbey. *The Myroure of Oure Ladye* and the Mandates of Vernacular Theology", in Olson L. – Kerby-Fulton K. (eds.), *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: 2005) 345–376. More generally on nuns' literacy: Bell D.N., *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo: 1995).

⁹⁰ Ellis R., "The Divine Message and its Human Agents: St. Birgitta and her Editors", *Studies in St. Birgitta and the Brigittine Order, Analecta Cartusiana*, vol. 1 (Salzburg: 1993) 209–233, 210–211.

⁹¹ Montag U., "The Reception of St. Birgitta in Germany", in Morris B. – O'Mara V. (eds.), *The Translations of the Works of St. Birgitta of Sweden into the Medieval European Vernaculars, The Medieval Translator. Traduire au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: 2000) 106–116.

⁹² On Bridget's influence in England, see Cleve G., "Margery Kempe: A Scandinavian Influence in Medieval England", in Glasscoe M. (ed.), *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England* (Cambridge: 1992) 163–178 and Grisé C.A., "Continental Women and the Textual Relics of Prayers in Late-Medieval England", in Jenkins J. – Bertrand O. (eds.), *The Medieval Translator. Traduire au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: 2007) 167–168. On the great number of English versions, see Pezzini D., "Brigittine Tracts of Spiritual Guidance in Fifteenth-Century England: A Study in Translation", in Ellis R. (ed.), *The Medieval Translator* (London: 1991) 175–207.

Middle Ages. One instance of her experience of intimacy with Christ expressed itself in the form of a maternal encounter with the infant Jesus. According to Claire Sahlin, Birgitta may have been inspired by Marie's visions of Jesus in various forms. Birgitta could have heard from her confessor, Matthias of Linköping, how Marie saw Christ on the day of his nativity crying in the cradle and feeding from the breasts of the Virgin.⁹³ Bridget's own experience of mystical pregnancy was a reference point for the fourteenth-century German visionary Dorothea of Montau (1347–1394), the mother of nine children. Dorothea herself, who spent two years among the Einsiedeln beguines, provides a good example of networks of spiritual women inspiring one another. She claimed that the foetus-like movements in her womb were even greater than Birgitta's.⁹⁴

The same form of holy competition between mystics for the most spectacular marks of God's grace can be found in Margery Kempe's own attitude toward Birgitta. The reading of the Swedish mystic's works, among others, was a source of inspiration for Margery to the point where she saw herself as a mediator whose responsibility was to legitimize and augment the truth of what was written in the books of her model. Once when she was hearing mass, she saw a dove fluttering from the host and heard Jesus's voice telling her: 'My daughter Bridget never saw me in this way'.⁹⁵ The voice then confirms Margery's prophetic and proselytizing mission:

For in truth I tell you, just as I spoke to St. Bridget, just so I speak to you, daughter, and I tell you truly that every word that is written in Bridget's book is true, and through you shall be recognized as true indeed.⁹⁶

Birgitta's influence came also from Margery's personal contact with people and places connected with the saint. During her pilgrimage in Rome, she met the visionary's servant who spoke to her, through

⁹³ Sahlin C. L., "'A Marvelous and Great Exultation of the Heart': Mystical Pregnancy and Marian Devotion in Bridget of Sweden's Revelations", *Studies in St. Birgitta and the Brigittine Order* vol. 1 108–128, 111.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 118; the account of Bridget's experience of spiritual pregnancy was read to the sisters of her convents on Christmas day (*ibid.* 119). The theologian Johannes of Marienwerder wrote down Dorothea's visions and made a biography (Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power* 193–210). About the point of view of the husband on her mystical experiences, see *The Flounder* by Günter Grass. Lukarde of Oberweimar also experienced a mystical pregnancy (we thank Piroska Nagy for this information).

⁹⁵ *The Book of Margery Kempe* 83.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

an interpreter, of the saint's mystical experiences and allowed her to visit the room in which she had died.⁹⁷ Another crucial encounter for Margery was with the anchoress Julian of Norwich who advised her and legitimized her spiritual journey.⁹⁸ From all of her encounters and exchanges, we can obtain a good sense of the complex reality of authorship in the Middle Ages, especially when a semi-literate woman is involved. The proem of the *Book of Margery Kempe* gives a detailed account of the difficult steps that led to the transcription of 'her feelings and revelations, and her form of living'.⁹⁹ Twenty years after she was first counselled to note them down by those to whom she confided – prelates, theologians, anchorites – she felt ready to undertake what she considered her mission. Unable to find a scribe, she had recourse to a man close to her, who used to live in Germany, an Englishman by birth who had returned to England with his family. The problem was that this man, believed to be her son, could write neither German nor English correctly, according to the priest who agreed to decipher this first draft and complete the work. Margery kept control over her text: it was she, not her scribe, who 'was primarily responsible for the Book's structure, arguments, and most of its language'.¹⁰⁰

Clearly evident from the case of Margery Kempe herself as author and true also of the mystic women's *vitalae* examined here, including those which she, as a 'reader', cites in support of her own spiritual practice, is a polyvocal conception of authorship. As has been observed of Margery and is equally applicable to the other authors discussed here, 'obedience, as constructed by Kempe's revelations, is a matter of negotiated agreement between Kempe and Christ to which confessors are mere adjuncts'.¹⁰¹ These works, situated in a 'gynecocentric' liturgical tradition,¹⁰² demonstrate literary practices embedded in sociability, in

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 131–132. Dorothea of Montau's possible influence can be explained by mercantile links between Lynn and Danzig as well as Margery's visit to Danzig and her family ties to Prussia: Stargardt U., "The Beguines of Belgium, the Dominican Nuns of Germany, and Margery Kempe", in Heffernan T.J. (ed.), *The Popular Literature of Medieval England* (Knoxville: 1985) 277–313, 307.

⁹⁸ *The Book of Margery Kempe* 77–81. Julian wrote her own visionary experience in the *Revelations of Divine Love* or *Showings*.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 35.

¹⁰⁰ Watson, "The Making of the *Book of Margery Kempe*" 397.

¹⁰¹ Dillon J., "Holy Women and their Confessors", in Voaden R. (ed.), *Prophets Abroad: The Reception of Continental Holy Women in Late-Medieval England* (Cambridge: 1996) 115–140, 135.

¹⁰² Wiethaus, "The Death Song of Marie d'Oignies" 168.

which the production of texts arises 'out of social relationships and situations that are established and maintained through talk'.¹⁰³ This notion of textual production as a collective, collaborative undertaking, unsettles our idea of a single author wholly responsible for a text, as well as our perception of a sharp distinction between literacy and orality. Close examination of this kind of practice demonstrates that non-literate women were not excluded from the production of books by their lack of ability to read or write.

As our examples have revealed, literate mystic women like Hildegard of Bingen who sometimes used scribes, or others who relied upon their admirers, male clerics or female members of their communities or households to record their visions and revelations, did not renounce their roles as authors. These women's continuing responsibility for their texts is affirmed by the reception of their testimonies; those who received their works, either as listeners or as readers, associated the spiritual lessons they contained with the mystic women themselves and not with their intermediaries. The spiritual practices of Marie of Oignies, Elizabeth of Hungary, and Bridget of Sweden provided role models for Margery Kempe, the reader, a woman acutely aware of the need for authorial control. Nor was she exceptional in this regard; as we have seen, mystic women authors learned from, and provided inspiration and support for one another, and other women who read their works became an essential part of the collaborative pattern of dissemination. All were partners in their shared enterprise, succinctly defined by Gertrud the Great as being 'to promote God's praise and her neighbour's salvation'.

¹⁰³ Watson, "The Making of the *Book of Margery Kempe*" 438 ; Scheepersma, "Mystical Networks in the Middle Ages" 56–57: even if he does not see hard evidence of 'intertextual relationships', he recognizes the existence of oral transmission and story-telling traditions. For a general view of the medieval concept of authorship, see Minnis A.J., *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Aldershot: 1988).

Selective Bibliography

- BARRATT A., "The Revelations of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary: Problems of Attribution", *The Library*, sixth series 14 (1992) 1–11.
- , "Introduction", *The Herald of God's Loving-Kindness*, vol. 1–2 (Kalamazoo: 1991) 11–15.
- BARTLETT A.C., *Male Authors, Female Readers. Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca – London: 1995).
- BELL D.N., *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo: 1995).
- BILINKOFF J., *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450–1750* (Ithaca: 2005).
- BOKENHAM O., *A Legend of Holy Women*, trans. S. Delany (Notre Dame – London: 1992).
- The Book of Margery Kempe*, eds. S.B. Meech – H.E. Allen, vol. 1 (London – New York: 1940, 1961).
- The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B.A. Windeatt (London: 1994).
- BOULTON M., "Littérature pieuse écrite par et pour les femmes au XV^e siècle", in Poirier G. (ed.), *Dix ans de recherche sur les femmes écrivains de l'Ancien Régime: influences et confluences. Mélanges offerts à Hannah Fournier* (Québec: 2008) 37–59.
- BYNUM C.W., "Women Mystics in the Thirteenth Century: The Case of the Nuns of Helfta", in *Jesus as Mother. Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: 1982) 170–262.
- CAESARIUS OF HEISTERBACH, [Die] *Schriften über die hl. Elisabeth von Thüringen*, ed. A. Huyskens, *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 86 (1908).
- CAPES F., "St. Elizabeth of Portugal", *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 5 (New York: 1909).
- CAZELLES B., *The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: 1991).
- CHANCE J., "Introduction", in Chance J. (ed.), *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Gainesville: 1996) 1–21.
- CLARK A.L., "Holy Woman or Unworthy Vessel? The Representations of Elisabeth of Schönau", in Mooney C.M. (ed.), *Gendered Voices. Medieval Saints and their Interpreters* (Philadelphia: 1999) 35–51.
- , *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia: 1992).
- CLEVE G., "Margery Kempe: A Scandinavian Influence in Medieval England", in Glasscoe M. (ed.), *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England* (Cambridge: 1992) 163–178.
- COAKLEY J.W., *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power. Female Saints and their Male Collaborators* (New York: 2006).
- CONYBEARE C., "Spaces between Letters. Augustine's Correspondence with Women", in Olson L. – Kerby-Fulton K. (eds.), *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: 2005) 57–72.
- Der Sog[enannte] Libellus de dictis quatuor ancillarum s. Elisabeth confectus*, ed. A. Huyskens (Kempten – Munich: 1911).
- DIETRICH OF APOLDA, *Die Vita der heiligen Elisabeth des Dietrich von Apolda*, ed. M. Renner (Marburg: 1993).
- DILLON J., "Holy Women and their Confessors", in Voaden R. (ed.), *Prophets Abroad: The Reception of Continental Holy Women in Late-Medieval England* (Cambridge: 1996) 115–140.
- ELLIS R., "The Divine Message and its Human Agents: St. Birgitta and her Editors", *Studies in St. Birgitta and the Brigittine Order, Analecta Cartusiana*, vol. 1 (Salzburg: 1993) 209–233.

- , “Margery Kempe’s Scribe and the Miraculous Books”, in Phillips H. (ed.), *Langland, the Mystics and the Medieval English Religious Tradition* (Cambridge: 1990) 161–175.
- FARMER D.H., “Elizabeth of Portugal”, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: 2003).
- GOODICH M., *Miracles and Wonders. The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150–1350* (Aldershot – Burlington: 2007).
- GOTTFRIED OF DISIBODENBERG – THEODORIC OF ECHTERNACH, *The Life of the Saintly Hildegard*, trans. H. Feiss (Toronto: 1996).
- GREENSPAN K., “Autohagiography and Medieval Women’s Spiritual Autobiography”, in Chance J. (ed.), *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Gainesville: 1996) 216–236.
- GRISÉ C.A., “Continental Women and the Textual Relics of Prayers in Late-Medieval England”, in Jenkins J. – Bertrand O. (eds.), *The Medieval Translator. Traduire au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: 2007) 165–178.
- HILDEGARD OF BINGEN, *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, trans. J.L. Baird – R.K. Ehrman, vol. 2 (Oxford: 2006).
- , *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, trans. J.L. Baird – R.K. Ehrman (New York: 1998–2004).
- HUGH OF FLOREFFE, *The Life of Yvette of Huy*, trans. J.A. McNamara (Toronto: 1999).
- JACOBUS DE VORAGINE, *The Golden Legend; Readings on the Saints*, trans. W.G. Ryan, vol. 2 (Princeton: 1993).
- JACQUES DE VITRY, *The Life of Marie d’Oignies*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1998).
- IMRE B., *Szent Erzsébet Irodalma* (Budapest: 1907).
- JACKSON W.A. – FERGUSON F.S. – PANTZER K.F., *A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London: 1976–1991).
- JAY M., “La Vie de sainte Douceline par Felipa Porcelet: les mobiles d’une hagiographe du XIII^e siècle”, in *Dix ans de recherche sur les femmes écrivains de l’ancien régime: influences et confluences. Mélanges offerts à Hannah Fournier* (Québec: 2008) 17–36.
- KERBY-FULTON K., *Books under Suspicion. Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame: 2006).
- KRUG R., “Reading at Syon Abbey”, in *Reading Families. Women’s Literate Practice in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca – London: 2002) 153–206.
- , *The Life of Beatrice of Nazareth, 1200–1268*, trans. R. DeGanck (Kalamazoo: 1991).
- , *The Life of Juliana of Mont Cornillon*, trans. B. Newman (Toronto: 1988).
- , *The Life of Saint Douceline Beguine of Provence*, trans. K. Garay – M. Jay (Woodbridge: 2001).
- MACBAIN W., “Anglo-Norman Women Hagiographers”, in Short I. (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays* (London: 1993) 235–250.
- Margaret Ebner, *Major Works*, trans. L.P. Hindsley (New York: 1993).
- M McNAMER S.E., *The Two Middle English Translations of the Revelations of St. Elizabeth of Hungary* (Heidelberg: 1996).
- MCDONNELL E.W., *The Beguines and the Beghards in Medieval Culture. With Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene* (New Brunswick: 1954).
- MECHTILD DE MAGDEBOURG, *La lumière fluente de la Divinité*, trans. W. Verlaquet (Grenoble: 2001).
- , *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, trans. F. Tobin (New York: 1998).
- MINNIS A.J., *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Aldershot: 1988).
- MONTAG U., “The Reception of St. Birgitta in Germany”, in Morris B. – O’Mara V. (eds.), *The Translations of the Works of St. Birgitta of Sweden into The Medieval European Vernaculars, The Medieval Translator. Traduire au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: 2000) 106–116.
- NEEL C., “The Origins of the Beguines”, in Bennett J.M. et al. (eds.), *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (Chicago – London: 1989) 240–260.

- NEWMAN B., "Hildegard and her Hagiographers. The Remaking of Female Saint-hood", in Mooney C.M. (ed.) *Gendered Voices. Medieval Saints and their Interpreters* (Philadelphia: 1999) 16–34.
- PEZZINI D., "Brigitine Tracts of Spiritual Guidance in Fifteenth-Century England: A Study in Translation", in Ellis R. (ed.), *The Medieval Translator* (London: 1991) 175–207.
- POOR S.S., *Mechtild of Magdeburg and Her Book. Gender and the Making of Textual Authority* (Philadelphia: 2004).
- Quellenstudien zur Geschichte der hl. Elisabeth Landgräfin von Thüringen*, ed. A. Huyskens (Marburg: 1908).
- SAHLIN C.L., "'A Marvelous and Great Exultation of the Heart': Mystical Pregnancy and Marian Devotion in Bridget of Sweden's *Revelations*", *Studies in St. Birgitta and the Brigitine Order, Analecta Cartusiana*, vol. 1 (Salzburg: 1993) 108–128.
- SANSY D., "Iconographie de la prophétie. L'image d'Hildegarde de Bingen dans le *Liber divinorum operum*", in Vauchez A. (ed.), *Les textes prophétiques et la prophétie en Occident (XII–XVI^e siècle)* (Rome: 1990) 405–416.
- SCHEEPSMA W., "Mystical Networks in the Middle Ages? On the First Women Writers in Dutch and their Literary Contacts", in Dijk S. van – Broomans P. – Meulen J.F. van der – Oostrum P. van (eds.), *'I Have Heard about you'. Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlof* (Hilversum: 2004) 43–60.
- SCHIRMER E., "Reading Lessons at Syon Abbey. The *Myroure of Oure Ladye* and the Mandates of Vernacular Theology", in Olson L. – Kerby-Fulton K. (eds.), *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: 2005) 345–376.
- STARGARDT U., "The Beguines of Belgium, the Dominican Nuns of Germany, and Margery Kempe", in Heffernan T.J. (ed.), *The Popular Literature of Medieval England* (Knoxville: 1985) 277–313.
- THOMAS DE CANTIMPRÉ, *The Life of Christina the Astonishing*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1999).
- , *The Supplement to Jacques de Vitry's Life of Marie d'Oignies*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1998).
- , *The Life of Lutgard of Aywieres*, trans. M.H. King (Toronto: 1991).
- VAUCHEZ A., "Lay People's Sanctity in Western Europe: Evolution of a Pattern (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)", in Blumenfeld-Kosinski R. – Szell T. (eds.), *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca – London: 1991) 21–31.
- VESSEY M., "Response to Catherine Conybeare. Women of Letters?", in Olson L. – Kerby-Fulton K. (eds.), *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: 2005) 73–96.
- WATSON N., "The Making of the *Book of Margery Kempe*", in Olson L. – Kerby-Fulton K. (eds.), *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: 2005) 395–434.
- WIETHAUS U., "The Death Song of Marie d'Oignies: Mystical Sound and Hagiographical Politics in Medieval Lorraine", in Kittell E.E. – Suydam M.A. (eds.), *The Texture of Society: Medieval Women in the Southern Low Countries* (New York: 2004) 152–179.

GENDERING PLACE: THE ROLE OF PLACE IN ANNE KRABBE'S BALLAD WORKS

Anne-Marie Mai

Introduction: Ballads and their History

In the history of Danish literature Denmark's old folk songs are rightly considered true historical gems. Most of these folk songs were handed down in a number of important books of ballad manuscripts, collected by noblemen and noblewomen in the Renaissance. One of the most interesting compilers of ballad-books in Danish Renaissance was the noblewoman Anne Krabbe (1552–1618): among the forty extant ballad-books from the period between 1500 and 1700 hers is the only one in which the ballads are ordered according to a certain system of localisation. This does not imply a modern, scientific, source-critical method. The order rather relies on Anne Krabbe's ideas that certain links existed between the stories and the places she was familiar with or knew about; it appeared particularly important to her that her family manor and its surrounding area were the home of those oral legends she called 'beautiful, old ballads'. This raises the question why place is so important for Anne Krabbe and whether some kind of connection exists between place and gender in her edition of ballads, where the life of women so often is a theme. Before these questions can be addressed, it is important to look at how modern research has discussed ballads and perceived the Renaissance ballad-book compilers.

Contemporary ballad research is rooted in nineteenth-century Romanticism and sees its task in ordering, registering and dating the ballads, and in determining their oldest variants. The possible medieval origin of this genre has raised great interest from the outset and so apart from investigations into the localisation of the ballads and their geographical spread, questions concerning the date of their transmissions and their commitment to paper became important issues. Denmark's most well-known editor of folk songs was the folklore collector and philologist Svend Grundtvig, who began the publication of *Danmarks*

Gamle Folkeviser (Denmark's Old Folk-Ballads) in 1853.¹ Grundtvig's view of folk-ballads was highly romantic and, as such, inspired by ideas on the vernacular origin of literature and on J.G. Herder's philosophy of language. Grundtvig's contribution was exceptionally valuable and he was immensely influential in folk-ballad research. His interest was in tracing the authentic folk voice in folk-ballads and in dating these ballads as far back as possible. In that sense compilers of ballad-books from former periods were considered important preservers of tradition on the one hand, yet on the other hand they were also regarded as sources of error in the passing down of the original Danish popular poetry. This was of great significance since it was assumed that the older the ballads could be revealed to be, the more they would bear witness to the strength and importance of a nation. For that reason the importance of the collection, edition and study of the songs by Renaissance nobility was toned down somewhat by these compilers. A majority of the ballad compilers were noble women and the image of a swooning chatelaine clutching her ballad-book accorded well with Romantic conceptions of the past, yet Romantic ballad research was cautious of the editing practice of these aristocratic women and on the lookout for their additions, adaptations and comments. Renaissance renderings of ballads were considered problematic 'free-hand drawings' that could disturb the impression of the authentically popular. Instead, Grundtvig strove to reveal 'the living poetic fount of the national genius' that would be 'a fount of rebirth for the age'.²

The Romantic concept of the ballad has dominated Danish research until today. It has given rise to a guardedness toward both the aristocratic compilers of ballad-books as well as to the context of the ballads, as Dorthe Duncker, among others, has pointed out. In a similar mode, a canon of ballads was established, in which ballads dealing with female culture that did not fit in with the Romantic concept of love and its gendered ideology were placed at the bottom of reading lists of Danish schools: ballads about lively christening parties among women, female revenge or sexuality were not commonly known literature. As far as the canonisation of ballads is concerned, one can speak of cultural censorship.

¹ The publication of *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser* was begun by Svend Grundtvig in 1853. This work was continued in the twentieth century by new folklorists, who continued to work on the basis of Grundtvig's division of the ballads into various types.

² Grundtvig S., *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: 1966) xvi.

Anne Krabbe and Renaissance Ballad Collection

During the Danish Renaissance a number of noblewomen collected ballads and their ballad-books are particularly intriguing, as they reveal the context within which ballads were committed to paper. While Svend Grundtvig divides ballads and their variants on the basis of a particular typology, in the Renaissance ballad-books the present-day reader or researcher sees the ballad as part of a fine artefact: the ballad-book itself. Here the female thematics are easier to catch sight of, and the short commentaries and interpretations which the collectors of the ballad-books wrote down can be seen alongside the text of the ballad.

Anne Krabbe came from a distinguished old Danish aristocratic family and, like her relations, she was deeply interested in her family history and in collecting ballads. At the age of thirty-six, she married the delicate Jacob Bjørn, who was her junior by nine years and who owned the manor house of Stenalt, situated by Randers Fjord on the east coast of Jutland. Jacob Bjørn died soon, in 1596, and Anne Krabbe spent the twenty-four years of her widowhood eagerly pursuing her historical interests and enhancing her manor and garden. She collected ballads, books and artefacts and restored Ørsted Church, which was part of her estate. Among other things, she compiled a valuable copy book with copies of sentences, wills, deeds of gifts and historical records, a manuscript notable for its copies of tombstones and epitaphs as well as a number of books with family coats of arms. In 1612 she published a small prayer book.³ But the most important

³ Anne Krabbe published the following prayer book: Krabbe A., Sal. Jac. Biørns Til Stenalt, *En liden nyttig Bone-bog, indholdende nogle korte trostelige Bøner; med nogle vdlæsne Sententzer, vdtagen aff Bibelen* (Copenhagen: 1612) (A small useful prayer book, contained some short, consoling prayers; with some selected sayings taken from the Bible). At the Royal Library in Copenhagen are the manuscripts: "En Lægebog skreven paa Stienalt 1614, og af Anne Krabbe skjænket til Birthe Friis, Albert Skeels til Fusinge" (Call number: Thott 714 quarto) (A manual of medicine written at Stienalt in 1614, and donated by Anne Krabbe to Birthe Friis, Albert Skeels of Fusinge); Microfilm of "En slægte- og våbenbog, der har tilhørt Anne Krabbe, sal. Jacob Bjørns til Stenald" (A family history and armorial that has belonged to Anne Krabbe wife of the deceased Jacob Bjørn at Stenald). The original is at Roskilde Home for Unmarried Ladies of Rank; furthermore, Anne Krabbe's handwriting has been identified in a copy of "Icones Regum Daniae" (The Rhymed Chronicle of the Danish Kings), compiled between 1590 and 1620 (call number: Thott 797 folio). According to information on the title page, the manuscript had belonged to Anne Krabbe. Also kept at the Royal

manuscript for which she was responsible was her beautifully designed ballad-book, in which she wrote down ballads she knew from broadsheets, pamphlets and other hand-written ballad-books and that served to enrich her estate both materially and culturally.

Anne Krabbe is thought to have compiled her ballad-book between 1610 and 1615.⁴ A copy of it is owned by The Royal Library in Copenhagen as part of the Abraham Kall collection (call number: Kall 393 kvart) and bears the title: *A volume with old Danish ballads, both heroic ballads and more recent historical ballads written in the seventeenth century*.⁵ The ballad-book contains eighty-eight ballads, fifty-four of which are provided with her commentaries. Four of the ballads are known exclusively from her ballad-book, although originally there might have been more ballads in the original book than those known now. It appears unlikely that Anne Krabbe did all the basic work of writing the ballads down herself. She probably had a number as scribes who did this for the songs she found either in other ballad collections and ballad-books or in leaflets and broadsheets.

Even though the Danish ballad-books resemble one another and often contain variations of the same ballads, each of them also has distinctive characteristics: they may contain different repertoires of ballads, have different structures, contain different annotations, small drawings and verses or include lists of members of the nobility who entered ballads in the books. Anne Krabbe's ballad-book reveals how she commented and tried to interpret the ballads she included in her book, often emphasising in the process how she herself had visited the locations where the ballads take place. In a characteristic introduction to one of the ballads she writes:

Library in Copenhagen is Anne Krabbe's "Copy Book" with copies of sentences, wills and historical records (call number: Gl. kgl. Samling 844.2)

⁴ Niels Werner Frederiksen dates the ballad-book this way. Anne Krabbe's original ballad-book has been lost, but a later copy, possibly from the eighteenth century, has been preserved, cf. Frederiksen N.W., "A noblewoman at her Writing Desk. Studies in Anne Krabbe's Ballad-book", in Lundgreen-Nielsen F. – Ruus H. (eds.), *Svøbt i mår* (Wrapped in Ermine) vol. 2 (Copenhagen: 2000) 341.

⁵ The original title is unknown, the mentioned title is the title of the copy (Et Bind med gamle danske Sange, saavel Kæmpeviser som nyere historiske; skreven i 17de Aarh. (A volume of old Danish songs, both heroic ballads and more recent historical ones; written in the seventeenth century). On the reverse of the ballad manuscripts is written: Samling af Kæmpeviser og andre Sange (Collection of heroic ballads and other songs).

After this follows a lovely old ballad, written about the daughter of a heathen king in days of old, Miss Guldborg, who was abducted from Kalø, but caught up with on Rosted field, which lies near Følge Mill. Many were killed for her sake, and they lie buried there. Their graves are known to this day. This took place in the Age of the Heroes. I Anne Krabbe, wife of the deceased Iacob Biørn have myself been to those places on 4 April 1605, where old people have told me that Guldborg's mother lived in the residence that lies near Rugaard [...].⁶

Anne Krabbe's book reveals a preponderance of ballads of chivalry and history (fifty-eight out of the eighty-eight ballads). Several of the ballads have been classified as late lyrical ballads, and nine of those included in *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser* are so-called 'nature-mystical' ballads. Among the historical ballads a number deal with Anne Krabbe's own male relations and tell of their strength, courage and bravery as knights, but in general many ballads in the book deal with women and women's lives.

With her artful collection of old ballads Anne Krabbe sought to impress social equals and learned visitors who came to her manor Stenalt. She used her ballad-book in establishing Stenalt as a so-called 'powerhouse',⁷ which became the centre of economic, cultural and historical influence. Material concerning Anne Krabbe and other aristocratic women who collected ballads puts literary research on the track of hitherto-unknown stories related to early modern literature and its thematisation of women and sexuality. In the following, the focus will be on how Anne Krabbe's ballads form part of her attempt to establish her aristocratic powerhouse, which is why she worked consciously on the localisation of the ballads and their interpretation. A closer analysis of her preoccupation with art and ballads reveals that her work contains both modern and premodern traits, as will also be discussed in the following.

⁶ 'Herefter følger en smuck gammell wisse, er dichtet om en fordomb hedenske kongis datter, och hun hide frochen Guldborig, som bleff ud-tagen fra Kalloe och bleff naaed paa Rosted- march, som liger wid Følge-mølle; och der stod en slacting for hindis skyld; och der liger di begraaffuen, som deris graffue ehr endnu kiend paa denne dag. Och skeede i kempernes thid. Som ieg Anne Krabbe sl. Iacob Biørns haffuer werit sielffuer paa di steder den 4. Aprilis 1605, haffuer gammel folch beret for mig, at Guldborgis moder boede i den gaard, der leger ved Rugaard [...]', Grundtvig, *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, vol. 2 342.

⁷ The concept 'powerhouse' occurs in Danish cross-disciplinary research on the cultural history of the manor house. It is introduced in Erichsen J. – Venborg Pederesen M. (eds.), *Herregården. Menneske, samfund, landskab og bygninger*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen: 2005) 8.

*Challenging the Traditional Writing of Literary
History: The Meaning of Place*

Anne Krabbe and the other aristocratic male and female compilers of ballad-books are not taken into account in traditional, national literary histories. Hardly anything about them can be found in them: sometimes their names are briefly mentioned, but other information is sporadic. The oldest ballad-book on Danish soil, the so-called *Hjertebog* (Heart-Book) from the 1550s, was written down by nobles at the court of the Danish King Frederik II. The first printed collection of ballads, *Hundredevisebogen* (The Hundred Ballad Book) was published by the historian Anders Sørensen Vedel in 1591. Most of the compilers of ballad-books were women living in Danish manor houses.⁸ Although historical accounts of the early modern literature of the Renaissance and Reformation often deal with the ballads, their main focus – as in the case of Svend Grundtvig – is on the individual ballad and its different extant variants. For this reason, the majority of the ballad-books have not been printed as facsimiles, and in order to gain an impression of the ballad-books in their entirety, it is necessary to visit the Royal Library in Copenhagen or the Regional Archives in Odense.⁹

Along with literary historiography and gender research, current ballad research challenges traditional literary-historical constructions and adopts a new, holistic view of the ballad-books. It attempts to consider the books as artefacts that are part of the collector's general self-fashioning activities. As such, Anne Krabbe has become the subject of renewed interest both in a recent major research edition on the ballads and their history, *Svøbt i mår. Dansk folkevisekultur 1550–1700*¹⁰ (Wrapped in Ermine. Danish Popular Ballad Culture 1550–1700), as well as in the five-volume work *Nordisk kvindelitteraturhistorie* (The History of Nordic Women's Literature).¹¹ Both works lift the writing of literary history out of traditional, national constructions and move it

⁸ Cf. Dahlerup P., *Dansk litteratur. Middelalder*, vol 2 (Copenhagen: 1998) 157–189.

⁹ Concerning 'Treasures in the Royal Library', see the address: http://www2.kb.dk/elib/mss/skatte/mss/thott_1510.htm

¹⁰ Lundgreen – Nielsen N. F. – Ruus H. (eds.), *Svøbt i mår. Dansk folkevisekultur 1550–1700*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: 1999–2002). It is, however, possible for the ordinary reader to get an impression of one of the ballad-books via the Royal Library's digital versions of its treasures.

¹¹ Møller Jensen E. et al. (eds.), *Nordisk kvindelitteraturhistorie*, 5 vols. (Copenhagen – Stockholm: 1993–1998). *Nordisk kvindelitteraturhistorie* is also in preparation in an English-language web version, which is expected to be available in 2013.

into present-day culture and thought, focussing on the artistic and cultural context of the ballads and their chroniclers.

New sources of inspiration for tracing the historical context and the characteristics of Anne Krabbe's work on the ballads can be found in the present-day philosophy of place, in concepts that deal with the self-fashioning of the Renaissance and in conceptions of space that reflect the relationship between place and gender. Thus, the American philosopher Edward S. Casey uses the concept 'place-world' in order to examine the significance of place for cognition, culture and history. He discusses place on a phenomenological basis and its conception in premodern, modern and postmodern culture. Although Casey applies his concepts of place and placeworld to studies of architecture and landscape gardening,¹² they are also highly relevant in research on literary history, since they shed light on both modern and premodern traits in literary texts and their origins.

According to Casey's hypothesis, modernity represents a paradigm shift where space and time triumph over place. In his article "How to get from Space to Place" he writes:

In this early modern paradigm shift, there was little space for place as a valid concept in its own right. As a result, place was disempowered: all the power now resided in space – and in time, the second colossal concern of modern thought. Although time was held to have direction, it was as essentially devoid of content as was space. A century after Newton described space and time as 'God's infinite sensorial', Kant considered them to be 'pure forms of intuition' located within the finite human subject. By this act of internalization, Kant sealed the fate of place even more drastically: at most, the human subject had 'position' in the space and time of its own making. But place was of almost no concern in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹³

I use Casey's hypotheses concerning place to look more closely at how Anne Krabbe's work on her ballad-book integrates both premodern and modern traits.¹⁴ Anne Krabbe's manor with its ballads and cultural

¹² Architecture and landscape gardening are included in the discussion of the concept place-world in Casey E.S., *Getting Back Into Place. Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington – Indianapolis: 1993) 107–183.

¹³ Casey E.S., "How to Get From Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena", in Feld S. – Basso K.H (eds.), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: 1996) 20.

¹⁴ It is also possible to analyse Anne Krabbe's place-world on the basis of the theoretical reflection by the American geographer David Harvey on the concept of 'space'. He emphasises that space can both be conceived as absolute, relative and relational,

values belongs to a premodern context, where the experience of place predominates, which is why she links her ballads to the place-world she establishes around her manor house. Instead of chronologically irreversible time or an abstract experience of space, a concrete location is the point of departure for human dealings, for self-esteem and the understanding of an outside world. Yet within this context it is equally important to add that Anne Krabbe's family place in fact also represents a renewal and transformation of premodern, traditional culture and use of place by this culture. She connects the ballads and her genealogical studies in a premodern way with the places where her family lived but at the same time she links the ballads in a modern manner to herself and her own creative individuality.

In her book she personally comments on the ballads and extracts her own interpretation of life from them. In that way she herself and her family place become an early modern alternative to the release of the individual into endless space and irreversible time so characteristic of modernity. Anne Krabbe writes her own personality into the family place, but at the same time makes a reality of her own modern, interpretative individuality. Anne Krabbe uses her family place and world of place in order to stage herself as an active, individual practitioner of culture. An early modern subjectivity is realising itself here via the premodern family place. Part of this creation and maintenance of place contributes to the kind of 'self-fashioning' Stephen Greenblatt considers characteristic of Renaissance writers and their main characters.

On the basis of Greenblatt's hypotheses, it is possible to show how Anne Krabbe's ballad-book was constituted as part of her efforts to strengthen her personal position as a fine noblewoman. Precisely in the period from the Renaissance to the Reformation, political and economic tension built up between the old aristocracy and the Crown in Denmark, and both the noble and the regal self-presentation in culture and art became central issues. Within this context literary texts, occasional poems, diaries, prayer-books and ballad-books were of great

according to circumstances. His point is that differing human practice and approach changes the conceptions of space. Anne Krabbe's ballad-book, on the basis of these concepts, belongs to the limited and absolute space of the manor house and refers to this. But her ballad-book also creates a relative space, since it is intended to be read by relations and visitors, some of whom have a close connection to Krabbe's place-world, while others have a more distant connection. See: Harvey D., "Space as a Keyword", in Castree N. – Gregory D. (eds.), *David Harvey. A Critical Reader* (Malden, MA: 2006) 270–294.

significance. Greenblatt links the 'self-fashioning' of the Renaissance to the new experience of being able to shape one's identity and life-style with the aid of art and literature. He points out:

Perhaps the simplest observation we can make is that in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process.¹⁵

Anne Krabbe's ballad-book, her art collection and her renovation of one of the manor house churches are part of this artistic self-fashioning process.

The power Anne Krabbe connects herself to by means of her locational 'self-fashioning' is her and her husband's family and its history. In other words, Casey's and Greenblatt's definitions make it possible to indicate a sense of how Anne Krabbe's world of place and her work on the ballad-book, church and art collections contain a blend of premodern and modern traits.¹⁶ The premodern and the modern often intersect in her world of place and her entire mode of thought in a way that may seem contradictory from a present-day point of view, but that is self-evident and unproblematic in her own context.

Place and Gender

The discussion of the premodern and modern in Anne Krabbe's culture and literature can be expanded and developed through philosophical reflections on the relationship between place and gender. Luce Irigaray's reflections on woman as a place in her interpretation of Aristotle in "Place, Interval: A Reading of Aristotle, *Physics* IV" is interesting in this connection. According to Irigaray woman is defined as place:

¹⁵ Greenblatt S., *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: 1980) 2.

¹⁶ It is relevant to point out at this juncture that recent studies show that focusing on the category of place and space can further an understanding of the blend of premodern and modern traits in Renaissance culture. Karen Newman's book *Cultural Capitals* (Princeton – Oxford: 2007) shows how London and Paris become cultural capitals. Newman takes as her point of departure a discussion of place and space as determining conditions for cultural, economic and social life. She thereby gains a new insight: that urbanisation and the emergence of big cities is not a nineteenth century phenomenon that is part and parcel of capitalism and industrialisation but a Renaissance phenomenon that can be connected with an innovative cultural development and production.

As for woman she is place. Does she have to locate herself in bigger and bigger places? But also to find, situate, in herself, the place that she is. If she is unable to constitute, within herself, the place that she is, she passes ceaselessly through the child in order to return to herself.¹⁷

Without delving too far into Irigaray's way of thinking, one can conclude that the female sex is the one whose body is a place both for the woman and for the man and child – or even God. If a male social, political or sexual context deprives woman of the possibility to constitute her own body as a place in herself, she must constantly allow the other in the form of the child to pass her body place in order to return to herself. A woman's body is an oxymoronic structure: it is both open and unmarked in its feeling of desire and closed and marked in its nature of being a place for another body. The more man involves himself in abstract space and the outside world, the more the female body assumes the nature of being the place as such for the man and, according to Irigaray, this means that the woman loses herself as a place. She is given the assignment of being the closed place of origin for the man and the child, not the open place of desire for the enjoyment of her own body.

One may wonder if it is at all possible to use Irigaray's somewhat abstract and present-day definitions for the study of something as historical and concrete as Anne Krabbe and her early modern context. Yet this highly general discussion can be relevant in considering the relationship of noblewomen to their families. The noblewomen of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had to guarantee the legitimate continuation of the old families at a time when entire successions of noble families died out. In the period between 1560–1640, more than seventy aristocratic Danish families became extinct.¹⁸ Both intermarriage and a dissolute lifestyle during study trips abroad weakened many a nobleman: young men returned from their European journeys mortally ill and the continuation of the family often hung on a very

¹⁷ Irigaray L., "Place. Interval: A Reading of Aristotle *Physics* IV", in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. C. Burke – G.C. Gill (Ithaca: 1993) 35.

¹⁸ Recent historical research discusses various explanations of the dying out of many noble families. While historians earlier assumed that dissolute lifestyle was the cause of families' disappearance, present-day researchers are of the opinion that the explanation is to be found in intermarriage between aristocratic families, cf. Ingeman P. – Jensen J.W. (eds.), *Riget, magten og æren. Den danske adel 1350–1660* (Århus: 2001).

thin male line. The noblewomen were and had to be the place for the body or bodies of the next generation to pass through, to use Irigaray's definitions, and to such an extent that they often succumbed to their many pregnancies.¹⁹ Anne Krabbe, by contrast, did not have any children. She buried her husband, the infirm Jakob Bjørn, only few years after entering into marriage with him and witnessed how his family died out with his death and how his coat of arms was broken. It does not appear convincing to maintain that Krabbe's cultural endeavours are a form of psychological or social compensation for the fact that she did not have any children, that she brought spiritual children into the world in the form of books and cultural objects. Such a straight, simple interpretation is unsatisfactory. What she did do was to strive to gather the many meanings of her family place around her own aristocratic figure and work.

If one takes Irigaray's hypotheses into consideration, one cannot see or interpret Anne Krabbe's ballad-book in isolation from the rest of her cultural and artistic activities. Although the ballad-book is a cornerstone, Anne Krabbe also narrates herself and her family in the refashioning of Ørsted Church, which was part of her estate, as well as in the furnishing of her manor house by means of collections of books and art.

She set about restoring Ørsted Church around 1595,²⁰ when she and her husband procured their tombstones and had a sepulchral chapel built for their families. After Jakob's death, Anne Krabbe systematically had the coffins of deceased family members moved to the chapel. In 1604, she had the features of Jakob Bjørn's and her names placed on all the church's pews and had family pews made with depictions of herself and her husband at the front of the church. Precisely around her own pew she gathered all the various symbolic meanings together. A woodcarving depicts her as a slender, young maid and with pink cheeks, a white headcloth and fine golden clothes. She appears as the incarnation of the proud ladies and maidens mentioned in the many songs she collected, and she keeps a firm hold of a small prayer

¹⁹ Scocozza B., "Danskere i Renæssancen", in Bach-Nielsen C. et al. (eds.), *Danmark og Renæssancen, 1500–1650* (Copenhagen: 2006) 55.

²⁰ Anne Krabbe's restoration of the church and all her cultural work in the area are dealt with by Knudsen R.H., "Anne Krabbe", in *Aarbog Randers Amts Historiske Samfund* (Randers: 1926) 5–60.

book – perhaps the one she published herself in 1612. She is flanked by allegorical figures with book and harvest implements in their hands featuring the divine and the worldly. All the meanings of the work of art are gathered in a golden whole around her person. The depiction of her husband Jakob Bjørn on the pew opposite complements her image. He is depicted as a fine man of the world with gold chains and clad in a soft cloak, carrying a bouquet of herbs – probably a sign that he was ill. He in no way resembles his warrior father, the knight Bjørn Andersen, who is represented in full armour on a large, well-preserved gravestone. Jakob Krabbe is surrounded by allegorical female figures with beautiful golden tresses. Anne Krabbe also added weight and significance to her own pew by placing an ancient gravestone inscribed with the name of Margaretha Stigsdatter close to the pew. Anne Krabbe believed that King Svend had had the church built and that he had organised the burial of Margaretha, who was perhaps an early owner of Stenalt, in 1050. So placing the ancient stone right next to her own pew and the picture of herself, stressed her sense of ancestry.

It may have suited Anne Krabbe well that Ørsted Church had some medieval reliefs by the great, twelfth-century master stonemason Horder. The pictures of Anne and Jakob thus work together with Horder's old representation of Adam and Eve, who hold hands in a most innocent fashion and wear figleaves to cover their private parts, while the serpent seems to tempt both of them. It is as if Anne Krabbe had succeeded in this church interior in forming a counterpart to those churches established by various noblemen in the region. When her aristocratic neighbours designed church interiors, they emphasised the family's monuments, family portraits and sepulchral tablets to impress the churchgoer with the family's nobility and its continuation in irreversible time. Whereas in the aristocratic church interiors, earthly time prevails, with sepulchral monuments and memorial tablets of fathers and sons poised ready in succession, in Anne Krabbe's church time is outdone by place. In Ørsted Church she retaliates, in fact writes back in stone and wood to a male understanding of chronology and succession, placing herself at the centre of a place-world where the family, the biblical myth and artefacts are contemporaneous.

The churchgoer experiences an interesting interaction between Anne Krabbe's pew and the communion table. No matter whether one sees Anne Krabbe's communion table or pew first in Ørsted Church,

one cannot help glancing from the one to the other. In 1613, Anne Krabbe provided the communion table with an oak panel depicting the Last Supper. The picture is framed by the twenty-four ancestral coats of arms of Anne Krabbe and Jakob Bjørn's families. Opposite the Last Supper scene and the coats of arms she inserted the following text: 'In highest praise of God, the church as His ornament and herself in remembrance'. The whole region, its world of legends, its history and church life are thus gathered around the person of Anne Krabbe. The depiction causes her to represent a kind of *genus loci*. The icon of the body becomes the actual cultural locus where all the meanings meet or from which they radiate. Admittedly, the picture of Anne Krabbe shows an erect, closed body completely gathered in on itself, but it is from this figure that all cultural and artistic meanings emanate and it is where they meet. And precisely Irigaray's ideas – no matter how abstract and speculative they might seem – concerning the female body as place enable us to grasp these meanings in the story of Anne Krabbe and her cultural work.

Female Culture and Sexuality

A large proportion of the eighty-eight ballads in Anne Krabbe's book deal with female culture and sexuality. Obviously Anne Krabbe praises Christian morals and a Christian way of thinking, and her work can be seen in relation to the fact that the Danish Reformation of 1536 promoted an interest in national history and the Danish language.

Anne Krabbe's example was the Ribe historian Anders Sørensen Vedel's *Hundredevisebog* (Hundred Ballad Book) from 1591. Vedel's collection was Scandinavia's first and biggest printed collection of ballads and his intention was to use the ballad-book in connection with his great task of writing a new history of Denmark. Strongly encouraged by Frederik II's wife, Queen Sophie, who was interested in ballads as was, too, her lady-in-waiting Beate Bille, mother of the world-famous astronomer and astrologer Tycho Brahe, Vedel managed to complete and have his collection printed in 1591. As a result, interest in ballads and the collecting and compiling of ballad manuscripts became fashionable in manor houses around Denmark. Vedel himself was particularly interested in connecting the ballads with royal national history and Christian morality. He also pointed out that the ballads

demonstrated that ‘our ancient Danish poets’²¹ could rival the Greek and Latin ones. In his opinion, the ballads were professional literature that made it abundantly clear that the nation and the royal house had a long, glorious previous history and an artistic tradition that could stand the comparison with other nations: ‘such ancient poetic verses have been in all nations from the very beginning’.²² Vedel sees the ballads as confirmation of the fact that ‘Our forefathers wished to demonstrate that Denmark is a free kingdom and has never been in the hands of any foreign power and that no one over a long, peaceful period was able to decide its fate’.²³ A free kingdom and one with exciting and dramatic historical events, as well as a number of just monarchs and virtuous queens.

Vedel’s ballad-book raised Anne Krabbe’s interest in collecting old ballads and commenting them. Soon she became proficient at using various sources when working on her own ballad-book and she considered the ballads as relics of an ancient oral culture. While Vedel linked the ballads to the history of kings, Anne Krabbe connected them, as mentioned, with the history of her aristocratic family and her family seat. Her praise of her own free, aristocratic family corresponds to Vedel’s praise of the Danish king and his vassals. She is a lady from the old Danish nobility, whose collection of ballads will be a counter-move to Vedel’s ideas about nation and king. She makes use of Vedel, yet in a sense also writes back by her preoccupation with place rather than nation and with family rather than king.

Anders Sørensen Vedel and Anne Krabbe do share the idea that in true Christian fashion, one is to learn from the ballads and their many stories and otherwise hope for personal salvation, and salvation for those who feature in the ballads. Yet a second look at Anne Krabbe’s ballads reveals that they deal, in addition, with the confrontation between pre-Christian and Christian culture as well as between male and female sexuality. The new Lutheran family ideal of marriage as a pleasurable worldly arrangement instituted by God that regulates sexuality and makes man the head of the family can, however, only

²¹ ‘vore Gamle Danske Poeter’, Vedel A.S., *Hundredevisebog*, ed. K. Thuesen (Copenhagen: 1993) 28.

²² ‘saadane gamle Poetiske dict haffue været udi brug aff første Begyndelse fast hoss alle Nationer’, Vedel, *Hundredevisebog* 28.

²³ “‘Vore Forfædre’ har villet give tilkende, at Danmark er et frjt Kongerige och aldrig haffuer været vdi nogen fremmet Herris Vold eller rolig oc languarig Heffd’, Grundtvig, *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, vol. 1 234.

be found on the periphery of the subjects in the ballads. Themes such as weddings, marriage, and the various relationships between men and women seem to have interested Anne Krabbe more as possibilities for depicting meetings and pacts than as a way to formulate a Lutheran way of thinking.

From Anne Krabbe's comments in the ballad-book it becomes clear that, as a true connoisseur of familial relations, she considered the union or confrontation of families in marriage as brilliant, dramatic material. Her background gave her more than enough experience in matters concerning entanglements and possibilities in the meeting of families in marriage. And since she regarded the characters of the songs as real people, it is interesting to note that her book contains a rich variety of songs about engagements, some of which describe happy courtings, but also disastrous seductions, rape, bigamy, abductions, lovers, deceitful parents, stories of disguise, insistent and revengeful sisters that try to help each other, honourable knights that aid damsels in distress, and resourceful maidens that are never at a loss.

Precisely such a resourceful maiden appears in one of the most interesting ballads, "Hr. Palles bryllup" (Sir Palle's Wedding), which Anne Krabbe believes took place near Stenalt. The song features the maiden Gunder who, on her way to church, is accosted by Sir Palle, who wants to rape her. She however suggests that they wait with sex until after mass and then she will willingly go home with him. Inside the church, she changes clothes with the driver, who follows Palle into the house while Gunder waters the horses. The driver is placed in the bridal bed, but when Palle asks him to turn away from the wall, the young man reveals who he is. Palle wants to kill him, but the man quickly jumps out the window, where Gunder is waiting with her carriage. She has a good laugh at Palle's expense and sends him a letter to inquire if the young man also was a virgin. The letter is then followed by a cradle and swaddling clothes for the driver's child. Palle cannot survive the shame and in accordance with all the rules of the ballad formula, he dies of grief, while Gunder continues to be 'so beautiful a maid'. Gunder seems to be entitled to make knight Palle and his unsuccessful sexual advances appear utterly ridiculous, as she has revealed herself to be cleverer than him. Gunder denies Palle's sexuality and desire and thereby his value for the family to such an extent that he is doomed. He succeeds neither as a Lutheran head of the household that can live up to the family ideal of the Reformation, nor as a founder of a traditional noble family. Maid Gunder, on

the other hand, does not represent any Lutheran chaste or motherly femininity either.

Anne Krabbe localised the story of Gunder in her own home region, pointing out in her introduction to the ballad the beech tree where Gunder paused to rest and where she was accosted by Palle:

Her resting place was here in the Sienalt copse close to a large beech tree that still exists, where a knight by the name Sir Palle once came to her, as is related in this song. Her way to the church passes here through the Sienalt copse and is still referred to as maid Gunder's path.²⁴

Another ballad where avenging women thwart male desire, with death and misfortune as a result, deals with Sir Ebbe's daughters. The ballad tells the story of two young noble sisters who are raped by their aristocratic neighbours, the brothers Bryndeld and Skeenelld, while the girls' father is on a pilgrimage and their mother away in town. The story begins with Bryndeld's vivid dream: he rode to Ebbe's manor, fell off his horse and was a source of ridicule to Ebbe's daughters, whom he and his brother had already shown considerable interest in. Skeenelld does not initially agree to paying the girls a visit while their father is not at the manor. He feels they should wait until Sir Ebbe has returned and only then woo the girls in proper fashion. Bryndeld, however, insists that they leave immediately; his dream has simultaneously enflamed his desire and raised his anger. When the brothers arrive, the girls are outside brushing their long hair. This scene is erotically charged and challenging for the two brothers. Strong urges, anger and erotic feelings are brought into play and the rape takes place. Afterwards, the girls first want to drown themselves in the pond, but eventually they decide to remain at home, as they had promised their father not to leave the manor. When he returns home, their mother has to explain what has happened. The father wants to seek revenge without delay, but the mother insists that the women themselves must take revenge, thereby showing what women are worth. So the song deals with a clash between a male and a female culture and underscores the right to be a woman that is respected. The daughters each

²⁴ 'hinde bidedsted war her udi Stienalt-lund, wid en stuor bøg, som endnu findis waaben paa samme bøg, huor en ridder wid naffin her Palli en gang kom til hinder, som denne wisse widre om formelder. Och legger samme hinde kjerke-wey her igien-nem Stienalt-lund och kaldis endnu paa denne dag iomfru Gunders wey', Grundtvig, *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser* 377.

give birth to a son and go off to the church in rich gold apparel. The mother of the raping brother proposes that the two 'brother wives' should be placed in the same pew, which would entail a recognition of their status as lovers. The sisters do not utter a word but go to communion together, which the brothers perceive as an acceptance of their *status quo*: they are highly pleased. However, things take a different turn from then on. The elder sister draws her sword out of its scarlet leather sheath and kills Skeenelld at the entrance of the church. Bryndeld is caught by the sisters at the high altar. After killing him as well, the women demand that the brothers should be laid side by side so that their blood can mingle inside the church. The ballad concludes with the image of the sisters returning home now that they have been avenged, while the mother of the brothers bears her sons to their grave. The revenge inside the church and in front of the altar indicates the importance and justice of the girls' action, yet there appears to be some cultural ambivalence at work. Underneath the Christian cult and morality there exists a family culture according to which the women live and act. The murder in front of the altar is a breach of the Christian peace of God that the women almost demonstratively set into motion immediately after the Holy Communion. The church is God's house, where one acts in accordance with His name, yet in the ballad it is also a haven for the public sphere of the family, where women act in accordance to family laws and in their own name. In her comment on the song, Anne Krabbe writes that the brothers are thought to have been buried close to Stenalt in Vivild Church.

A more teasing and jovial portrayal of the encounter between various cultures and morals can be found in the ballad "To Brude og en Brudgom" (Two Brides and a Bridegroom), with the refrain "Hr. Laves amor" (The Love of Sir Lave). The ballad starts with little Kirsten who is grieving herself to death since Sir Lave, who has enticed her, is to marry another woman. So Kirsten's brother Jens intervenes: he dresses her in a bridal gown, places her in the bridal carriage and arrives with his sister at the church where Lave is to be married. There he insists that the vicar first marry Lave and Kirsten, which ends up with the vicar marrying the three of them. At the marriage bed scene Jens once again intervenes and insists that Lave first share the bridal bed with Kirsten, unless he prefers to die in the banqueting hall. Lave retires to the bridal bed, while Jens quickly slams the door to prevent the second wife from entering: 'Stay outside, you young bride, and have a good night'. (Stander ude, vor unge Brud, och haffuer goede nat') When

the vicar avoids the problem, and refuses to support the family union that has taken place because of the enticement Kirsten is very much interested in, Jens intervenes at the official bridal bed and decides matters by barring the way for the other bride: 'goodnight and goodbye!' The church wedding is a rather doubtful affair, but the official sexual family union of the traditional bridal bed is another matter and a most important issue.²⁵ Morality and the cult of the family are stronger than vicar and church, and both the construction and conclusion of the ballad are fashioned in such a way that they must have amused those who read it or listened to it.

Women's sexual infidelity is also a theme that occurs in Anne Krabbe's ballads, as in many others. The unfaithful queen Sophie in the song on Valdemar the Great is presented as an out-and-out criminal. It is the king's niece, the pious nun Luselille, who reveals that the queen, apart from having murdered her sister-in-law, has slept with the archbishop and fifteen of his men. The king has the queen flogged until she bleeds and Luselille gives her an extra kick and is allowed to place her on the bridge of the city of Ribe, so that she can ride over her dishonoured body. This is a dynamic, account-settling female avenger, completely devoid of the patience, meekness and gentleness that Lutheranism likes to ascribe to women as a typical virtue. Furthermore, infidelity is present more as a matter between the women of the families than one between men and women.

The ballad "Grev Henrik og Kongens Søster" (Count Henrik and the King's Sister) features another confrontational mixture of Christianity and family morality, where Christian values gain the upper hand. When the king of Denmark wants to have poor Count Henrik beheaded because he has slept with the King's sister, Henrik chooses to carry the red-hot iron to prove that he loves her, and the song ends with praises to God: 'praised be God the Father in Heaven, who can change all things'.²⁶ Lutheran reformational elements are also present in "Overvunden Klosterlyst" (Overcome Desire to enter a nunnery), where marriage is placed higher than a maiden's decision to enter a

²⁵ Wedding rituals were regulated at the end of the sixteenth century, i.e. precisely at Anne Krabbe's time, by Frederik II's church ordinance (1582), and the relation between secular festivities and the church ceremony was thereby placed in a more fixed framework than before, cf. Lund T.A., *Daghligh i Norden i det 16. Aarhundrede*, vol. 9 (Copenhagen – Kristiania: 1914) 15.

²⁶ 'Ioffuet være Gud-fader i himmerig/som kan alting wende'. Grundtvig, *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, vol. 7 397.

convent. Her reason for choosing the convent is more of a passionate wish to die a virgin than a matter of belief. At home, she has already started wearing sackcloth and ashes when all of a sudden the charming, well-dressed King Orm pays a visit and asks for permission to play a boardgame with her to see if she is to marry him. He wins, and before long the virgin forgets everything about life in a nunnery. In fact, she grabs hold of him herself: 'She gladly took him on her arm/The nunnery vanished from her mind/now both of them live in happiness and peace/the rest of their natural lives'.²⁷ In true Lutheran fashion, marriage is better than the convent, even though tricks of an older cultural nature than Lutheranism are brought into play before the virgin accepts the idea. The nunnery in the song is also a rather ambiguous institution: it appears to be more a place for a particular community of virgins than a site where a Christian life of faith is led.

Anne Krabbe's ballads have a Christian set of values as their framework and the Lutheran persuasion is part of her construction of place. But at the same time it is characteristic that the ballads contain old ideas concerning the family and female culture that mix with the Christian and Lutheran values in a distinctive and at times surprising and contradictory way. The songs can be read in an archaeological manner and in them, we can uncover various layers of cult and culture, where male and female living space and values alternate. For Anne Krabbe it was important that precisely her manor and the surrounding area was the home of oral legends that could be linked to the 'beautiful, old ballads'.

The song researcher David W. Colbert offers an important explanation as to why the place legends give the ballads a particular truth value for Anne Krabbe:

The determining of location may seem to us scholars to be somewhat random or simple, but that is because our view is based on comprehensive reading. In an oral culture, on the other hand, the determining of location serves to make the ballad topical, i.e. both present and real. At the same time, the places one frequents in one's everyday life now become places that contain stories.²⁸

²⁷ 'Hun thog hennem løstelig i sin arum,/ det Kloster gich hinde aff sinde;/ nu lefuer di bode med glede och rou/ den stund deries lif kan winde', Grundtvig, *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, vols. 8–9 485.

²⁸ Colbert D.W., "Når folkeviser finder sted", in Lundgreen-Nielsen F. – Ruus H. (eds.), *Svøbt i mår. Dansk folkevisekultur 1550–1700* (Copenhagen: 1999) 197.

While Anne Krabbe's contemporary Anders Sørensen Vedel considered the ballads as ancient, professional national literature, Anne Krabbe appears as a professional collector and storyteller who wants to complete the old oral culture with her own statements, her documents and presence on the spot: 'I Anne Krabbe, the wife of the deceased Jakob Biørn, have personally been to those places'. Anne Krabbe's work with culture and literature is an interesting focal point between the pre-modern and the early modern as well as a challenge to write a national literary history empirically, methodologically, and theoretically. Now that the empirical material has been so well analysed by ballad research, there is every reason to write literary history and take up the theoretical, methodological and gender-related issues provoked by the ballad-books.

Selective Bibliography

- ERICHSEN J. – PEDERSEN M.V. (eds), *Herregården. Menneske, samfund, landskab og bygninger*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: 2005).
- CASEY E.S., “How to Get From Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena”, in Feld S. – Basso K.H. (eds.), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: 1996) 13–52.
- CHRISTENSEN A.S., “Herremandsliv i Danmark 1500–1660”, in Lundgreen-Nielsen F. – Ruus H. (eds.), *Svøbt i mår. Dansk folkevisekultur 1550–1700*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen: 2000) 283–340.
- COLBERT D.W., “Når folkeviser finder sted”, in Lundgreen – Nielsen F. – Ruus H. (eds.), *Svøbt i mår. Dansk folkevisekultur 1550–1700*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: 1999) 185–208.
- DAHLERUP P., *Dansk litteratur. Middelalder*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: 1998).
- DUNCCKER D., “Visernes vej. Sammenhæng mellem visebøger?” in Lundgreen-Nielsen F. – Ruus H. (eds.), *Svøbt i mår. Dansk folkevisekultur 1550–1700*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: 1999) 147–184.
- FREDERIKSEN N.W., “En adelsdame ved arbejdsbordet. Studier i Anne Krabbes visebog”, in Lundgreen-Nielsen F. – Ruus H. (eds.), *Svøbt i mår. Dansk folkevisekultur 1550–1700*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen: 2000) 341–462.
- GREENBLATT S., *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: 1980).
- GRUNDTVIG S., *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, 12 vols. (Copenhagen: 1966–1976).
- HARVEY D., “Space as a Keyword”, in Castree N. – Gregory D. (eds.), *David Harvey. A Critical Reader* (Malden, MA: 2006) 270–294.
- INGESMAN P. – JENSEN J.W. (eds.), *Riget, magten og æren. Den danske adel 1350–1660* (Århus: 2001).
- IRIGARAY L., “Place. Interval: A Reading of Aristotle, *Physics IV*”, in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. C. Burke – G.C. Gill (Ithaca: 1993) 34–55.
- KOCK J., *Østjyske herregårde* (Aarhus: 2000).
- KNUDSEN R.H. (ed.), *Aarbog. Randers amts Historiske Samfund* (Randers: 1926) 5–60.
- LARSEN J. (ed.), *Dansk kvindebiografisk leksion*, online: <http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/597/bio/520/origin/170/>.
- LUND T.A., *Dagligliv i Norden i det 16. Aarhundrede*, vol. 9 (Copenhagen – Kristiania: 1914).
- NEWMAN K., *Cultural Capitals. Early Modern London and Paris* (Princeton – Oxford: 2007).
- PEDERSEN R., “Folkemindesamleren Anne Krabbe”, in Møller Jensen E. et al. (eds.), *Nordisk kvindelitteraturhistorie*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: 1993) 518–519.
- PEDERSEN V.A., “Anne Krabbe og Vibeke Bild” in Bach-Nielsen C. et al. (eds.), *Danmark og renæssancen 1500–1600* (Copenhagen: 2006) 216–225.
- SCOCOZZA B., “Danskere i Renæssancen”, in Bach-Nielsen C. et al. (eds.), *Danmark og Renæssancen, 1500–1650* (Copenhagen: 2006) 44–61.
- VEDEL A.S., *Hundrevisebog*, ed. K. Thuesen (Copenhagen: 1993).

The manuscript of Anne Krabbe's ballad-book is owned by The Royal Library, Copenhagen. It is to be found in the Abraham Kall collection (call number: Kall 393 kvart) and bears the title: A volume of old Danish ballads, both heroic ballads and more recent historical ballads written in the seventeenth century.

‘TO MAKE FREQUENT ASSEMBLIES, ASSOCIATIONS,
AND COMBINATIONS AMONGST OUR SEX’.
NASCENT IDEAS OF FEMALE BONDING IN
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Ina Schabert

In view of the numerous defences of women published throughout the seventeenth century in the context of the *querelle des femmes*, one might suppose the existence of female solidarity in early modern England. Women, so it seems, answered back. However, even where the defences are signed by female names, they are as a rule written by men. Attacking women and imagining their repartee was a rhetorical game popular with authors and readers. Only in one case are we sure that it was a woman who defended her sex, namely the nineteen-year-old Rachel Speght. Her pamphlet *A Mouzell for Melastomus* (1617) is the bold answer to Joseph Swetnam’s crude pamphlet *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women* (1615).¹ Similarly, the numerous catalogues of great, worthy, learned and virtuous women produced on the feminist side of the so-called formal controversy suggest that the act, or at least the idea of women gathering together in the interests of their sex would have been familiar to seventeenth-century readers. Yet the roll-call of women, too, is an empty figure of speech, handed down from one (in most cases male) writer to another. As the deceitfulness of animals is again and again illustrated by the cockatrice, the serpent, the crocodile, the basilisk and the hyena, so the intellectual capacity of women is mechanically exemplified by Aspasia, Corinna, Deborah, Lady Jane Grey, Elizabeth I and others.

From a feminist point of view, the evidence is disappointing. Hopes are frustrated that women as such tend to bond with one another and women writers prefer to address readers of their own sex, sharing with them the pleasures of female togetherness and the security of female

¹ Gwynne Kennedy, in *Just Anger: Representing Women’s Anger in Early Modern England* (Carbondale: 2000) 35, reminds us of the unwelcome fact that Speght’s is the only defence known to be written by a woman.

solidarity. In fact, it would have been difficult for women writers, especially in the first decades of the century, to envision themselves as a separate group capable of collective measures of self-protection or revenge. According to the predominant sexual ideology, the 'one-sex model',² excellent women were considered as 'masculine'. As such, they were the rare exception, existing not in the plural but in the singular. At the beginning of the century only a very small portion, namely 0,8%, of all books published was written by female authors, the number rising to 11,1% toward the end of the century.³

Women who wrote were, first of all, members of the heterosocial community of a family and, sometimes, of the royal court. They considered themselves as belonging to the Sidneys, the Carys, the Cavendishes.⁴ Within patriarchal structures, women's power was limited, although it could be quite strong within these limits. The 'academy' of Mary, Countess of Pembroke in Wiltshire, the circle of Lucy, Countess of Bedford in Twickenham, and, above all, the coterie of Queen Anne at the court of James I were important influences in cultural life. As Margaret Ezell has shown, the social impact of the 'patriarch's wife' could be considerable.⁵ She might look to it that her daughters (as well as her sons) got an excellent education. Women in aristocratic families sometimes assembled large collections of books which were handed down in the female line.⁶ Upper-class women getting together with their needlework had books read to them for their entertainment.⁷ Thus we may assume that there was something like a female reading culture. However, aristocratic women writers, such as the Countess of Pembroke, Lady Elizabeth Cary and Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, did not join forces; they did not develop friendly relations with one another nor did they mention one another in the complementary sections of their books. They referred rather to male members of their own families who had a reputation as an author. Female writers

² Laqueur T., *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1990).

³ Crawford P., "Women's Published Writings 1600–1700", in Prior M. (ed.), *Women in English Society 1500–1800* (London: 1985) 211–282.

⁴ Wynne-Davies M., *Women Writers and Familial Discourse* (New York: 2007).

⁵ Ezell M.J.M., *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill: 1987).

⁶ Bell S.G. "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture", *Signs* 7 (1982) 742–767.

⁷ Schleiner L., *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington: 1994).

of lower rank, for example Rachel Speght or Bathsua Makin, were educated by a learned uncle or father, and looked up to them. Makin taught in her father's school and later inherited her father's collection of books.

'There is so far little evidence that Englishwomen knew of other women's published or circulated writings', concludes Louise Schleiner, whose study of *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* inquires into the possibility of female networks in Early Modern England. And even where a gesture of solidarity would have offered itself, there is none. Mary Countess of Pembroke and Lucy Countess of Bedford did not extend their generous patronage to female authors. Rachel Speght and Bathsua Makin made no mention of one another, although they lived in the same quarter of London at the same time. Margaret Cavendish, who was enthusiastic about Lucretius's atomism, did not care for Lucy Hutchinson's manuscript translation of his *De rerum natura*.⁸ During her exile in the Netherlands Cavendish met Christina of Sweden and probably also Elisabeth of Bohemia, both famous as learned women; she must have heard much about Anna Maria van Schurman and at least a little of Bathsua Makin, whose brother-in-law John Pell exchanged letters with her own brother-in-law and philosophical mentor Charles Cavendish. Yet in her writings and their prolific paratexts she mentions none of these. She knows about Lord Edward Denny's bitter criticism of a romance written by Lady Mary Wroth, which discouraged her from all further publication of her work; yet while repudiating it, Cavendish appropriates it as a criticism of her own activity as an author, without so much as mentioning Wroth's name.⁹ In the choice of the foreign texts which they translate, women show no preference for other women's works.¹⁰ It comes, then, as no surprise that Christine de Pizan's utopia of a female community, *La cité des dames*, which was available in an English translation since 1521, is mentioned by no English woman writer throughout the seventeenth century, although some upper-class women would have had easy access to the book or could at least have seen one of the series of tapestries derived from

⁸ Rees E., *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile* (Manchester: 2003).

⁹ The texts of Denny's satirical poem and of Wroth's counterattack are reprinted in Roberts J.A. (ed.), *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* (Baton Rouge: 1983) 32–35. Cavendish refers to Denny's poem in her address to 'all noble and worthy ladies' before *Poems and Fancies*, 1653 and again in her preface to *Sociable Letters*.

¹⁰ Cf. Crawford, "Women's Published Writings" for a list of translations by women in seventeenth-century England.

it. It is possible, however, that the rare visions of female solidarity offered by women in their writings were indirectly inspired by *The City of Ladies*.¹¹

On the whole, it seems, Renaissance women, if they wrote at all, did not think of themselves as representatives of the female sex writing back at their male colleagues. They rather wrote *with* the men, hoping to be accepted as exceptional female citizens in the republic of letters. Neither was their feminism 'individualist', as Constance Jordan maintains.¹² It was an attempt to establish oneself within a patriarchal, male-dominated society. Only in the last decades of the seventeenth century did a sense of community begin to develop among women. Only then did they gather sufficient courage and strength as well as economic independence to be able to take the offensive. I shall trace some steps in this process. The documents from the beginning of the seventeenth century up to the 1670s which I shall present are rare exceptions to the rule of male-oriented female self-fashioning. They are brave, isolated attempts to conjure up, with the help of the literary imagination, seducing images of female togetherness.

Piety as a Bond between Women: Lanyer's "Salve Deus"

Aemilia Lanyer came from an Italian family. Her father, the Venetian Baptista Bassano, immigrated to England in the time of Henry VIII to accept the post of musician at the royal court. The young Aemilia took part in Elizabethan court life as the mistress of Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain. When pregnant, she was married off to Alfonso Lanyer, a distant relative with an Italian background as well. A few years later, in difficult economic circumstances, she attempted to obtain, or to maintain, by means of a religious poem, the patronage of Margaret (Russell) Clifford Countess of Cumberland, in whose household she seems to have lived for some time.¹³

¹¹ Malcolmson C., "Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies* in Early Modern England", in Malcolmson C. – Suzuki M. (eds.), *Debating Gender in Early Modern England 1500–1700* (New York: 2002) 15–25. Christine is mentioned in a man's book on great women, Charles Gerbier's *Elogium Heroinum* of 1651.

¹² Jordan C., *Renaissance Feminism* (Ithaca: 1990).

¹³ For details of Lanyer's life see Woods S., *Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet* (Oxford: 1999).

The poem, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), narrates and celebrates the Passion of Christ. It concentrates on Christ's beauty and his suffering in the manner of the meditation exercises made popular by the Counter-Reformation. In its attention to physicality and its emphasis on the sensuous qualities of Christ's body and his sufferings, Lanyer's poem expresses a baroque sensibility, reminding its readers of the poetry written by the Jesuit Robert Southwell and by Henry Vaughan. It sets itself against the de-feminization of religion that characterizes the English Reformation.¹⁴ The Latin title and the prominent role attributed to the Virgin Mary, and the reference even to the "Ave Maria" (302),¹⁵ also point to a Roman Catholic sensibility. The poem empathizes strongly with Christ's 'woeful mother' (301) and the other women who witnessed Christ's suffering and his crucifixion. It dwells lovingly on the biblical tears of the daughters of Jerusalem and makes much of the warning dream of Pilate's wife which, had it been heeded by her husband, would have altered the course of history. In a preliminary epistle, Lanyer subsumes Christ's special relationship to women:

It pleased our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, without the assistance of man, [...] from the time of his conception till the hour of his death, to be begotten by a woman, nourished of a woman, obedient to a woman; and that he healed women, pardoned women, yea, even when he was in his greatest agony [...] took care to dispose of a woman; after his resurrection first appeared to a woman, sent a woman to declare his most glorious resurrection to the rest of his disciples. (270)

The picture of female togetherness in Christ is set off by scenes of male indifference and hostility towards Christ: the disciples are unable to defend him, the elders condemn him to death, Pilate collaborates in their crime, and rude men of the people torture and execute him. Men's responsibility for Christ's sufferings and death, Lanyer concludes, puts them on equal terms again with the women, even if one holds women responsible for the original sin: 'your indiscretion sets us free'. (293) In addition, she inserts a long vindication of Eve. *Salve Deus* thus develops into a general defence of women.

¹⁴ Cf. Oliva M., "The State of the Nuns at the Dissolution and their Conversion to Secular Life", in Greatrex J. (ed.), *The Vocation of Service to God and Neighbour* (Turnhout: 1998) 87–103.

¹⁵ References are to the page numbers of the text in Purkiss D. (ed.), *Renaissance Women: The Plays of Elizabeth Cary. The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer* (London: 1994).

The women who are meant to read the poem are drawn into its world. They are made to participate in a religious rite celebrated by an exclusively female community. The process is set into motion in the poem's extraordinary preliminary section. Female writers in Early Modern times tend to dedicate their works to women rather than to men and to preface them with compliments to women, in order to invoke a female reading space and make a bid for female patronage.¹⁶ An atmosphere of female-to-female understanding and sympathy is thereby suggested. However, women must not be addressed as equals, but with careful distinction of rank – distinctions between the writer and her dedicatees as well as between the latter. Rachel Speght, for example, dedicates her *Mouzell for Melastomus* 'To all virtuous Ladies Honourable or Worshipfull, and all other of Heva's sex', thus setting aristocratic women ('honourable') and the wives of city officials ('worshipful') apart from the rest of her prospective female readership (Eve's sex). Even so, she deems it necessary to justify her boldness of grouping them together as 'joint spectators' of her literary performance by stating that this has been forced upon her by the strategy of her adversary who 'hath opened his mouth against the noble as well as the poor'.¹⁷

The art of conjuring up a female community that encompasses the author and her readers is brought to perfection by Lanyer. In a preliminary section of more than 900 lines, she offers complimentary texts to Queen Anne and eight aristocratic ladies with most of whom she claims personal acquaintance. The addresses are arranged according to strict rules of precedence, although Lanyer seems to chafe at the necessity to make distinctions.¹⁸ They vary according to the individual lady's status and her special interests.¹⁹ The fact that there are considerable religious differences among the dedicatees – from a close-

¹⁶ Cf. Eckerle J.A., "Prefacing Texts, Authorizing Authors, and Constructing Selves: The Preface as Autobiographical Space", in Dowd M. – Eckerle J.A. (eds.), *Genre and Women's Writing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: 2007) 97–114.

¹⁷ Speght R., *The Polemics and Poems*, ed. B.K. Lewalski (New York: 1996) 3.

¹⁸ Cf. the address "To the Lady Anne, Countess of Dorset": 'What difference was there when the world began? / Was it not virtue that distinguished all? / All sprang but from one woman and one man,/ Then how doth gentry come to rise and fall?' (265)

¹⁹ The following observations are based on Diane Purkiss's text from the second Huntingdon copy which includes all the complimentary texts; some of them were left out in some of the presentation copies, especially the compliment to Lady Arbella Stuart, who fell in disgrace with King James. Which proves the brittleness of even an attempt at imaginary female solidarity.

ness to Roman Catholicism to radical puritanism – is played down by the attribution of virtue and piety to all of them. The solidarity effect of the textual association is considerably strengthened by a unique gesture of creating togetherness: The women to whom the book is offered are being invited to a feast organized by the poet. The author interprets her writing of the story of Christ's passion in material terms as the preparation of the Paschal Lamb. Her little book, she says, provides 'heavenly food' (263), presents 'even our Lord Jesus himself', his 'bruised body' which is the 'wheat of heaven' (324). Thus the imagined community of female readers is intensified by an imagined communion rite. In addition to the nine ladies mentioned by name, the Countess of Suffolk's three daughters are included in the invitation, which makes the religious parallel more obvious: Lanyer dares to imagine, as a counterpart to the Lord's Last Supper, a 'Lady's Supper', with herself in the position of the host.²⁰ Later in the poem, the role of the priest is gradually transposed to the Countess of Cumberland, her prospective patron, whose relation to Christ is represented, in several long digressions inserted into the biblical narration, as that of an intimate closeness. Thus distinguished, the Countess is associated with the mother of God and is also celebrated as the successor of St. Peter!

The work is rounded off with a second poem in honour of the Countess of Cumberland, the *Description of Cooke-ham*. It celebrates the Countess's stay at Cookham, a family mansion, where she had lived for some time in retirement, together with her daughter Anne Clifford and the poet herself (probably as tutor to Anne). The female household is idealized into another, more intimate situation of female togetherness, again characterized by meditation and prayer. Whereas the classical country house poem celebrates the hierarchy of a male-dominated society, Lanyer invents a variation on the genre by describing a paradise of female intimacy with Christ from which men are excluded.

Lanyer's fiction of female togetherness had been anticipated and was probably inspired by the works of late sixteenth century Italian women writers. By means similar to hers – complimentary addresses to aristocratic ladies and descriptions of imagined female communities –

²⁰ For a more detailed version of this reading, see my article "The Lady's Supper: Aemila Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* as a Female Celebration of the Eucharist", in Rupp S. – Döring T. (eds.), *Performances of the Sacred in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Amsterdam: 2005) 155–167.

authors such as Moderata Fonte, Maddalena Campiglia and Lucrecia Marinelli had developed the idea of a 'potential autonomous, female-authorized literary space' for women.²¹ In Jacobean England, Lanyer's vision was unique and it was not appreciated according to its merits. The only contemporary reaction to the poem that can be deduced from textual evidence is irritation concerning the inclusiveness of the group of dedicatees, as well as the selection and ranking of the aristocratic ladies. At least some of the distinguished addressees did not welcome the idea of being part of a female community. From the consequences which the Roman Catholic elements and the blasphemous feminization of the Lord's supper could have brought upon her, Lanyer was probably protected by her invisibility as a woman.²²

*Sensual Delight as a Bond between Women:
Cavendish's "Convent of Pleasure"*

A similarly idiosyncratic fantasy of a female community is created a few decades later by Margaret Cavendish in one of her plays. In her case, the fiction of an ideal company of women can be taken as a compensatory gesture in a life characterized first by exile and later by wilful self-isolation. Cavendish has been a problem for feminist scholars. She is fond of declaring her self-sufficiency, yet she strongly depends on her husband as her patron and as the admiring critic of her writings. She devises feminist catch-phrases like the one quoted in the title of my essay,²³ yet cultivates an aggressive individuality that borders on antifeminism. Moments of female solidarity are regularly set off by gestures of aristocratic arrogance.

The Convent of Pleasure, a closet drama published in 1668 but probably written some years earlier, is marked by this ambiguity. Its sub-

²¹ See Chapter 5 in Cox P., *Women's Writing in Italy 1400–1650* (Baltimore: 2008) 158.

²² A similar representation of the Last Supper as a Ladies' Supper, the poster "Some Living American Women Artists: Last Supper" (1972), by Mary Beth Edelson, caused a scandal when it was shown to the public.

²³ 'Ladies, Gentlewomen, and other Inferior Women, but no less worthy: I have been industrious to Assemble you together, and wish I were so fortunate, as to persuade you to make frequent Assemblies, Associations, and Combinations Amongst our Sex, that we may unite in Prudent Councils, to make ourselves as Free, Happy, and Famous as Men', in Cavendish Margaret, *Orations of Divers Sorts* (London, A. Maxwell: 1668²) (Section "Female Orations" 238–240).

ject is the founding of a female community by an aristocratic lady. Throughout the seventeenth century, long before it became a feminist issue, English educators and clergymen stated the need of an institution for unmarried and widowed women as a substitute for the female monasteries which had been abolished in the Reformation. Yet never before or after was a project submitted to the public which was to unite women in a life of pleasure. The protagonist of Cavendish's play, the young, beautiful and rich Lady Happy, decides that instead of trusting her large fortune as a dowry to a husband and accepting all the miseries of married life (represented in a play within the play), she will remain single and pass her time with like-minded female companions. For this purpose she establishes her Convent of Pleasure:

I will take so many Noble Persons of my Own Sex, as my Estate will plentifully maintain, such whose Births are greater then their Fortunes, and are resolv'd to live a single life, and vow Virginity: with these I mean to live incloister'd with all the delights and pleasures that are allowable and lawful (Sc. I,ii).²⁴

The ladies live in luxury, indulge in conversation, walks and theatricals and enjoy their friendship. Into the paradise, however, temptation enters in the shape of a charming princess with whom Lady Happy instantly falls in love and who eventually discovers herself to be a prince in disguise. In a final scene, written by her husband, Cavendish's vision of feminist solidarity dissolves into a conventional happy ending.

Yet like the comedies of Shakespeare where the unruly potential of unconventional women is finally contained by means of conventional marriages, the play is more than its ending. Cavendish's lush fantasy, although negated at the end, is not only remarkable as a strong reaction against Puritanism in general, but also as a plea against the economical marginality of single women which is taken for granted by her society. The project might have been inspired by her knowledge of similar institutions for women in Continental Europe, the protestant 'Damenstifte', where unmarried or widowed, often wealthy aristocratic ladies led a protected, self-determined and cultivated life. Cavendish would have heard that Elisabeth of Bohemia, whom she had probably

²⁴ Ferguson M. (ed.), *First Feminists: British Women Writers 1579–1799* (Bloomington: 1985) 89.

met in Holland, had become the abbess of such a Damenstift in the German town of Herford.²⁵

Learning as a Common Interest: Makin's "Essay"

Bathsua Makin's *Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen* (1673) was written and published with a view to an immediate practical effect. Female education was Makin's life-long concern. As a young woman she taught in her father's school, later she became governess to King Charles's daughter Elizabeth, and after the early death of the princess she was entrusted with the education of the daughters of the distinguished Hastings family. Makin was the first learned woman in seventeenth-century England with genuine transnational interests. She corresponded with van Schurman and she knew Elisabeth of Bohemia, cousin to her own royal pupil. The three women agreed in considering the knowledge of languages as the key to learning; all three were famous linguists. By way of Schurman and her brother-in-law John Pell, lecturer of mathematics in Amsterdam and Breda, Makin got first-hand information from Holland, which led her to recommend the Dutch system of female education to her English readers.²⁶

The *Essay* was published when Makin was more than sixty years old. Its pragmatic function was to advertise for a school for girls which she had recently founded at Tottenham High Cross, near London.²⁷ It is indebted to Schurman's plea for female learning, *De Ingeniū Muliebris*

²⁵ In 1661 Elisabeth became co-adjutor, in 1667 abbess of the Reichsabtei of Herford. (For a short time, in 1670, she offered the Stift as an asylum to her friend Anna Maria van Schurman and the sectarian group of the Labadians. Barbara Becker-Cantarino, in her survey *Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit* [Munich: 1989] 115, mentions this as a very rare gesture of female solidarity: 'Hier haben wir einen der ganz wenigen Fälle, in denen eine Frau eine andere, gleichgesinnte Frau öffentlich (außerfamiliär) unterstützt hat'.)

²⁶ A few decades later, Judith Drake will again take the Dutch as her model of female emancipation in her *Essay in Defense of the Female Sex* (London, A. Roper: 1696). Makin finds that the Dutch educate their women to become virtuous and useful members of society; Drake (p. 16) specifies that by means of arithmetic and other arts they are made capable not only to transact household affairs but also substantial financial and commercial business.

²⁷ Earlier speculations on Makin's life are superseded by the findings of Frances M. Teague published in her biography *Bathsua Makin: Woman of Learning* (Lewisburg, Pa.: 1998).

(1641), yet written in a much less formal, flexible, insinuating style.²⁸ It works with a transparent fiction of male authorship in order to win the necessary male consent to female education. Makin is very much aware that she needs male complicity and therefore has to make concessions. 'Let not your ladyships be offended that I do not (as some have wittily done) plead for female preeminence', her 'male' essayist writes, for: 'To ask too much is the way to be denied all' (110).²⁹ Aggressive feminism would defeat its own object. So the essayist begins by professing moderation, yet 'his' plea ends by claiming every field of knowledge for women, there being nothing which cannot be of use in the life of a gentlewoman. 'This discourse may be a weapon in your hands', the writer tells 'his' female readers (110).

Throughout, the *Essay* expresses a strong sense of female solidarity. Its dedication 'To all Ingenious and Vertuous Ladies, more especially to her Highness, the Lady Mary, eldest daughter to his Royal Highness, the Duke of York' adroitly combines a new note of egalitarianism with courtly etiquette. It is made clear, however, that the equality is restricted to intelligent women from wealthy families; those who are 'poor' and/or 'of low parts' are excluded (128). The writer pokes fun at the popular idea that female learning should be severely restricted because of its disastrous consequences: 'A learned woman is thought to be a comet that bodes mischief whenever it appears', Makin sarcastically remarks (109). She makes clear that female education should be a subject close to the heart of every lady. In the main text, she takes up the catalogue of great and learned women from the defence tradition and gives it a new meaning. Her various lists, which enrich the traditional roll-call with new names, impress by pure quantity. Strong women from the Old and the New Testaments, mythical 'women' like Minerva, the Three Graces and the Nine Muses, Greek and Roman women famous for their learning or their poetry, mystics from medieval Germany, authors such as Elisabeth von Schönau (whom Makin knew as the author of *A Path to direct Us to the Way to God*), Hildegard von Bingen and Hroswitha of Gandersheim, Italian Renaissance women, Queen Christina of Sweden, Anna Maria van Schurman and Elisabeth of Bohemia are grouped together with Englishwomen of the

²⁸ Cf. Myers M., "Domesticating Minerva: Bathsua Makin's 'Curious' Argument for Women's Education", *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 14 (1985) 173–192.

²⁹ Page references are to the reprint of the *Essay* in Teague, *Bathsua Makin*.

sixteenth and seventeenth century, from the Cooke sisters and Mary Countess of Pembroke to Makin's contemporaries Anne Bradstreet (who emigrated to New England), Katherine Philips and Margaret Cavendish. The names create the illusion of a grand transhistorical and transnational army that stands in for the cause of female learning. Neither moral prejudices nor differences of religion or class seem to count: Sappho as well as Pope Joan, Queen Elizabeth of England as well as 'Mrs. Thorold, daughter of the Lady Car in Lincolnshire' and 'Dr. Love's daughters' are enlisted. Feminist interests, it is suggested, are able to bridge the differences.³⁰ The *Essay* vividly conveys the author's keen pleasure in all kinds of knowledge and her strong sympathy for intellectual women.

Makin's life-long engagement for women's education prepared the way for the feminist movement of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in England. A granddaughter of the Hastings family, where she worked as a teacher, the Lady Elizabeth Hastings, became a leading member of the feminist Chelsea circle in early eighteenth-century London. Makin also taught Elizabeth Drake, the mother of the eighteenth-century writers and Bluestocking Ladies Elizabeth (Robinson) Montagu and Sarah (Robinson) Scott.³¹

*The Social Bonding of Cartesian Feminists: Judith Drake's
"Essay in Defense of the Female Sex" and Mary Astell's
"Serious Proposal to the Ladies"*

From the 1670s onwards, female solidarity developed into an important issue in English life and letters. The upheavals of the Civil War, the Restoration and, later, the Revolution of 1688 weakened family ties and destroyed family properties. Many upper and middle class women had to fend for themselves, and at least some of them discovered the value of female cooperation. During the Commonwealth Puritan women had tried to exert some influence in the political life of

³⁰ For obvious reasons the stout Royalist draws the line at radical Puritan authors like Margaret Fell Fox and the women who wrote prophecies during the Commonwealth era.

³¹ Cf. Brink J., "Bathsua Makin: Educator and Linguist (English 1608?–1675?)", in Brink J.R. (ed.), *Female Scholars: A Tradition of Learned Women before 1800* (Montreal: 1980) 86–100.

their country by means of petitions to Cromwell's Parliament. These were signed by large numbers and, at least in one case, underlined by a mass demonstration of women.³² Royalist women in exile had witnessed the social and intellectual self-confidence of the ladies in the Parisian *salons* and observed the liberties that Dutch women were allowed. Not only was Fénelon's mildly feminist project for a girls' school at Saint-Cyr, *De l'éducation des filles* (1687), soon available in English in George Hickes's version, but also François Poullain de la Barre's radical treatise *De l'égalité des deux sexes, discours physique et moral, où l'on voit l'importance de se défaire des préjugés* (1673) was published in London as *The Woman as Good as the Man* (1677). Poullain – who was engaged in a learned correspondence with Elisabeth of Bohemia – puts Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* to feminist uses. The Cartesian doctrine of the dualism of body and mind is taken by him as proof that 'l'esprit n'a point de sexe' – 'the mind has no sex'. And from Descartes's *cogito*, the thinking subject independent of traditions and authorities, Poullain draws the conclusion that women, who in contrast to men have not undergone a formal education, might therefore be the better, more independent thinkers. The subtitle of the treatise underlines the importance of freeing oneself from scholarly prejudices.³³

Cartesian feminism, combined with John Locke's emphasis on the importance of experience, offered an epistemological framework for women's claim to a full participation in intellectual life. Female competence in literature, philosophy and science was no longer considered the exception but claimed as the rule. For better (for example in the laudatory section of Edward Phillips's *Theatrum Poetarum*, 1675) or for worse (as in satires such as the *Session of Poets*, 1676 and *The Female Wits*, 1696) intellectual women came to be considered as a group.

We find that female readers now expressly identify with female writers. 'Thou glory of *our* sex, envy to men', exclaims a certain 'Philo-Philippa' in a complimentary poem to Katherine Philips's translation of Corneille's *La mort de Pompée* (1667).³⁴ Aphra Behn edits several poetical

³² See Higgins P., "The Reactions of Women, with Special Reference to Women Petitioners", in Manning B. (ed.), *Politics, Religion and the English Revolution 1640–1649* (London: 1973) 179–222.

³³ On Cartesian Feminism cf. Harth E., *Cartesian Women: Versions and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Regime* (Ithaca: 1992).

³⁴ Quoted in Siegfried B. R., "Dining at the Table of Sense: Shakespeare, Cavendish and *The Convent of Pleasure*", in Romack K. – Fitzmaurice J. (eds.), *Cavendish and Shakespeare: Interconnections* (Aldershot: 2006) 279 (emphasis added).

miscellanies in which women's works are more generously represented than in other anthologies.³⁵ She offers her translation (1688) of Bernard de Fontenelle's *La Pluralité des Deux Mondes* to female readers in order to wean them from the French romances and draw them into the study of philosophical texts.³⁶ 'Our Sex for ever shall neglected lye;/ Aspiring Man has now regain'd the Sway', complains 'a young lady of quality' in an elegy on the death of Behn (1689).³⁷ Yet Behn lived on in her followers. Female poets and dramatists at the turn of the century consider themselves as 'daughters of Behn'. 'We have not only *Bunduca's* and *Zenobia's*,³⁸ but *Sappho's* and *Behn's*, and *Schurman's*, and *Orinda's*, who have *humbled* the most haughty of our Antagonists', Elizabeth Johnson proudly states before Elizabeth Singer's *Poems on Several Occasions* (1696), recommending the new work as a continuation of women's great tradition.³⁹ As in this case, female solidarity frequently shades into competitive and antagonistic feelings towards men.

Two publications in the 1690s are convincing evidence of women's new sense of solidarity, grounded in their will to participate in the world of learning and letters. *An Essay in Défense of the Female Sex* appeared in 1696. The author of the spirited pamphlet has been identified by Moira Ferguson as Judith Drake, sister of the Anglican scholar and scientist James Drake, who contributed a commendatory poem to the work.⁴⁰ The poem ranks his sister together with 'Orinda' (Katherine Philips) and 'Astrea' (Aphra Behn). The subtitle *A Letter to a Lady. Written by a Lady* and the dedication to Ann of Denmark (later Queen Anne of Britain) establish a female frame of reference. Feminists rallied behind the princess who was soon to succeed to the English throne. Drake undertakes to defend 'the Honour of the whole Sex' against male arrogance. Fellow-feeling among women is taken

³⁵ Cf. Russell A., "Aphra Behn's Miscellanies: The Politics and Poetics of Editing", *Philological Quarterly* 77 (1998) 308.

³⁶ Behn A., "'The Author's Preface' to the translation of *La Pluralité des Deux Mondes*", in Ferguson (ed.), *First Feminists* 148–151.

³⁷ Quoted in Salzmann P., *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: 2006) 209 (emphasis added).

³⁸ Boudicca was a British Celtic queen who led a revolt against the Romans; Zenobia, known as Warrior Queen of the Palmyrene empire, is also reputed to have been a philosopher.

³⁹ Quoted by Jane Spencer in *Behn's Afterlife* (Oxford: 2000) 155 (Orinda is the complimentary name for Katherine Philips).

⁴⁰ See Ferguson, *First Feminists* 201.

for granted; even the Princess is included in the comprehensive first person plural of 'Our Sex'.

Drake's argument is derived from Cartesian feminism – 'No distinction of Sexes in Souls' (11) – and Locke's empiricism – 'I take Nature to be the Great Book of Universal Learning' (47) – yet both philosophies are toned down by common sense.⁴¹ Experience, she finds, is enlarged by the reading of books, philosophical, moral and historical literature, plays, novels, satires and poems written in or translated into English. Because of the many translations, linguistic competence is not – as the male system of education assumes – a necessary condition for scholarship: 'For the only reason I can conceive of Learning Languages, is to arrive at the Sense, Wit or Arts, that have been communicated to the World in 'em.' (41) Female knowledge, obtained by means of reason, experience and second-hand experience mediated by books, is communicated and further accumulated by means of 'Company' and 'Conversation' (26), conversation mainly between women but also mixed conversation. Conversation is the most important way perhaps even of obtaining and certainly of transmitting knowledge. The *Essay* itself is offered as evidence for this: it grew out of a conversation between some ladies and gentlemen. For Drake, the drawing room, not the university, is the nation's school of virtue, good manners and useful knowledge. The idealized picture of a female-dominated heterosocial culture is set off by criticism of traditional male scholarship:

For Schollars, though by their acquaintance with Books, and conversing much with Old Authors, they may perfectly know the Sense of the Learned Dead [...], yet by their retir'd and unactive Life, their neglect of Business, and constant Conversation with Antiquity, they are such Strangers to, and so ignorant of the Domestic Affairs and Manners of their own Country and Times, that they appear like the Ghosts of Old Romans rais'd by Magick. (27)

Drake's project foregrounds and reevaluates traditional aspects of female bonding – mothers instructing their daughters, ladies meeting together in their drawing rooms. Thus it can unobtrusively and all the more effectively be assimilated to everyday life. It anticipates the feminized

⁴¹ Page references are to [Drake Judith], *An Essay in Defense of the Female Sex* (London, Roper: 1696).

intellectual atmosphere of the eighteenth century periodicals and prepares the way for the domestic culture of the bourgeoisie.

Drake's *Essay* has formerly been attributed to Mary Astell. Both women are Cartesian feminists, but whereas Drake adjusts the doctrine to practical life, Astell prefers a purer, less worldly version. Due to her strict adherence to feminist ideals, she became a model for early eighteenth-century British feminists. As an orphan at the age of 20, she left Newcastle for London in order to establish herself in the cultural life of the capital. She gained the protection of the archbishop of Cambridge, William Sancroft, and was adopted by a group of High Church ladies. They founded the 'Chelsea Circle', which became a centre for upper-class women's intellectual activities and social work. In contrast to Speght, Lanyer, Makin, Cavendish and probably Drake, and like the other ladies of her circle, Astell remained unmarried and proudly so. In her life she practiced the kind of female bonding she recommends in her writings.⁴²

Already in one of her letters to the philosopher John Norris in the early 1790s, Astell connects her vision of female solidarity with women's conversion to a spiritual life:

Fain wou'd I rescue my Sex, or at least as many of them as came within my little Sphere, from that meanness of Spirit into which the Generality of 'em are sunk, perswade them to pretend some higher Excellency than a well-chosen Pettycoat or a fashionable Commode [...] (195).⁴³

In her feminist tract, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest* (1694), she bases her hopes on an optimistic view of women in general. 'A desire to advance and perfect its Being', she finds, 'is planted by God in all Rational Natures' (145). The striving towards perfection is, for her, a striving towards participation in the divine. The religious life is best realized within a supportive group of like-minded women. Female friendship, as Astell understands it, is motivated by and orientated towards the love of God.⁴⁴ She encour-

⁴² See Perry R., *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist* (Chicago: 1986).

⁴³ Letter 3 to Norris (195). The correspondence was published 1695 as *Letters Concerning the Love of God*. All page references in brackets are to Bridget Hill's edition: *Mary Astell: The First English Feminist. Reflections Upon Marriage and Other Writings* (Aldershot: 1986).

⁴⁴ For a detailed study of Astell's association of female friendship and the love of God cf. Kolbrener W., "Astell's 'Design of Friendship', in *Letters* and *A Serious Proposal*, Part 1", in Kolbrener W. – Michelson M. (eds.), *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith* (Aldershot: 2007) 49–64.

ages her female readers to abandon their worldly pleasures and invites them to join a community dedicated to theological and philosophical thought and pious meditation. For her, this would be the continuation of the best feminist tradition: 'Remember, I pray you, the famous Women of former Ages, the *Orinda's*⁴⁵ of late, and the more Modern Heroins' (140–141), she tells the ladies. She becomes quite enthusiastic about her project which she calls a female *Monastery* or *Religious Retirement*:

In fine, the place to which you are invited is a Type and Antepast of Heav'n, where your Employment will be as there, to magnify God, to love one another, and to communicate that useful *knowledge*, which by the due improvement of your time in Study and Contemplation you will obtain [...] (151).

She even describes the imagined community in terms of the *corpus mysticum*:

In a word, this happy Society will be but one Body, whose Soul is love, animating and informing it, and perpetually breathing forth it self in flames of holy desires after God and acts of Benevolence to each other (157).

Like Lanyer, she appropriates theological concepts for her utopia. Yet in spite of high-flying words, the project is solidly grounded in social needs. Her institution, Astell says, would offer protection and a purposeful life to single women (165). (Strangely, she never mentions the Protestant 'Damenstifte' in defense of her project.) She also takes care of the financial side of her plan. Due to her ascetic idea of a good life, she considers a very modest sum as sufficient for the founding and maintaining of the institution: 'Who will think 500 pounds too much to lay out for the purchase of so much Wisdom and Happiness?' (168).

Astell in her *Proposal* wants to convince, not irritate her readers. Criticism and satire are used only sparingly in order to persuade fashionable ladies to change their life-style and to win the male public over to the conviction that to deny women free access to learning (closely bound up with piety) is a wrong in itself and in the end works against male interests as well. Attack is reserved for a later time when it has

⁴⁵ Although Astell makes use of the poet Katherine Philips's reputation, she excludes poetry and fiction from her ideal of a rational life.

become obvious that the *Religious Retirement* will not be realized.⁴⁶ In *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (1700), written in answer to a male advice-book for brides, *The Bridewoman's Counsellor* (1699), Astell no longer spares the adversary. The author John Sprint, a nonconformist clergyman, holds that wives owe absolute obedience to their husbands. His book became a rallying cry for feminist women. The anonymous 'Eugenia', the poet Mary Lee, Lady Chudleigh and Mary Astell united their efforts to refute Sprint's claims. Astell strongly objects to Sprint's basic tenet that women are relational creatures, dependent on husbands. By a close reading of the relevant passages in the Bible she proves that Sprint's doctrine of female submission is by no means justified by the word of God. Her style has hardened into invective, although the antagonistic stance is camouflaged as a male writer's well-meant exhortation to his own sex to treat women humanely.

Another clergyman, William Nichols, confirmed Sprint's position in his pamphlet *The Duty of Inferiours Towards their Superiours* (1701) – the 'Inferiours' being, of course, the women. However, the reign of Queen Anne (1702–1714) was soon to prove this assumption wrong at least with regard to one woman, the English sovereign. To maintain any longer the thesis of general female inferiority would be high treason, as Astell points out in a new preface to the 3rd edition of the *Reflections* (1706) which grows to half the length of the main text. She starts her argument for female self-determination by establishing a parallel between Queen Anne's female rule and her own female authorship (70). The conventional address of the woman writer to an aristocratic lady is thus given a new twist towards female solidarity.

Astell's writing, no longer disguised as that of a man, has become proudly self-assertive. The invective is even more biting than in the earlier text when she once more insists on women's fundamental independence from men. In 1700 she had accused her male contemporaries who insisted on female subordination of 'employing an immortal Mind no better than in making Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof' (129). In 1706 she compares a wife serving her husband to a man whose duty it is to keep hogs: in both cases, their identity is not bound up with their task; 'it is only a Business by the Bye' (72).

⁴⁶ Her first reaction to the defeat was to add to *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* a second part "*Wherein a Method is offer'd for the Improvements of their Minds*" (1697). This is a guide to individual theological and philosophical reading and meditation.

She introduces an additional line of defence by referring to the fashionable political theory of her time: If one accepts Locke's contractualism (as she does not but the English have done by choosing William of Orange instead of James II as their king), it has to be applied to the family as well as to the state, she argues. If political subjects have a right to resistance, wives should certainly be granted the same (76). Yet she sarcastically denies that her impassioned plea for the rights of woman would have any effect on them:

Women are not so well united as to form an Insurrection. They are for the most part Wise enough to Love their Chains, and to discern how very becomingly they set (86).

In her time, Astell now finds, female solidarity will only be practiced by a small elite. The preface ends with a paean to Queen Anne, considered as the patron of these few who would form the spear-head in the battle for a better future. She reserves her enthusiasm for this band of free women 'tracing a new Path of Honor', supporting the Queen in her endeavour to lead her country into 'Millenium Days' (87). The religious orientation of the community of women in *A Serious Proposal* has changed into an idealistic political mission. Yet a few years later, before these – anyhow unrealistic – hopes could be fulfilled, the Queen died.

Astell's *Serious Proposal* was widely read and reprinted several times. Her proposal of a *Religious Retirement* for women was mentioned again and again and recommended as a useful or even brilliant idea throughout the next fifty years. But it was never put into practice.⁴⁷ Sarah Scott, daughter of Elizabeth Drake (see above), presented a new variation of Astell's project in her utopian novel *A Description of Millenium Hall* (1762). Then the idea of a community of women died out, or rather went underground for nearly a century.

⁴⁷ Historians explain this with reference to the British mistrust concerning everything even faintly Roman Catholic or the general aversion to female ways of self-fashioning independent of men. Virginia Woolf, in *Three Guineas*, takes the failure as evidence for society's timeless aversion to spend money on female education. See Schabert I., "Der gesellschaftliche Ort weiblicher Gelehrsamkeit: Akademieprojekte, utopische Visionen und praktizierte Formen gelehrter Frauengemeinschaft in England 1660–1800", in Garber K. – Wismann H. (eds.), *Europäische Sozietätsbewegung und demokratische Tradition* (Tübingen: Niemeyer 1996), vol. 1 755–789.

Selective Bibliography

- BECKER-CANTARINO B., *Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit* (Munich: 1989).
- BELL S.G., "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture", *Signs* 7 (1982) 742–767.
- BRINK J.R., "Bathsua Makin: Educator and Linguist (English 1608?–1675?)", in Brink J.R. (ed.), *Female Scholars: A Tradition of Learned Women before 1800* (Montreal: 1980) 86–100.
- CRAWFORD P., "Women's Published Writings 1600–1700", in Prior M. (ed.), *Women in English Society 1500–1800* (London: 1985).
- DRAKE JUDITH, *An Essay in Defense of the Female Sex* (London, Roper: 1696).
- ECKERLE J.A., "Prefacing Texts, Authorizing Authors, and Constructing Selves: The Preface as Autobiographical Space", in Dowd Michelle M. – Eckerle J.A. (eds.), *Genre and Women's Writing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: 2007) 97–114.
- EZELL M.J.M., *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill: 1987).
- FERGUSON M. (ed.), *First Feminists: British Women Writers 1579–1799* (Bloomington: 1985).
- HARTH E., *Cartesian Women: Versions and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Regime* (Ithaca: 1992).
- HILL B. (ed.), *Mary Astell: The First English Feminist. Reflections Upon Marriage and Other Writings* (Aldershot: 1986).
- JORDAN C., *Renaissance Feminism* (Ithaca: 1990).
- KENNEDY G., *Just Anger: Representing Women's Anger in Early Modern England* (Carbondale: 2000).
- KOLBRENER W., "Astell's 'Design of Friendship' in *Letters* and *A Serious Proposal*, Part 1", in Kolbrener W. – Michelson M. (eds.), *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith* (Aldershot: 2007) 49–64.
- LAQUEUR T., *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1990).
- MALCOLMSON C., "Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies* in Early Modern England", in Malcolmson C. – Suzuki M. (eds.), *Debating Gender in Early Modern England 1500–1700* (New York: 2002) 15–25.
- MYERS M., "Domesticating Minerva: Bathsua Makin's 'Curious' Argument for Women's Education", *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 14 (1985) 173–192.
- PERRY R., *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist* (Chicago: 1986).
- PURKISS D. (ed.), *Renaissance Women: The Plays of Elizabeth Cary. The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer* (London: 1994).
- REES E., *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile* (Manchester: 2003).
- ROBERTS J.A. (ed.), *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* (Baton Rouge: 1983).
- RUSSELL A., "Aphra Behn's Miscellanies: The Politics and Poetics of Editing", *Philological Quarterly* 77 (1998) 307–329.
- SALZMANN P., *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: 2006).
- SCHABERT I., "The Lady's Supper: Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* as a Female Celebration of the Eucharist", in Rupp S. – Döring T. (eds.), *Performances of the Sacred in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Amsterdam: 2005) 155–167.
- SCHABERT I., „Der gesellschaftliche Ort weiblicher Gelehrsamkeit: Akademieprojekte, utopische Visionen und praktizierte Formen gelehrter Frauengemeinschaft in England 1660–1800“, in Garber K. – Wismann H. (eds.), *Europäische Sozietätsbewegung und demokratische Tradition*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: 1996) 755–789.
- SCHLEINER L., *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington: 1994).
- SPEGHT R., *The Polemics and Poems*, ed. Lewalski B. K. (New York: 1996).
- TEAGUE F.M., *Bathsua Makin: Woman of Learning* (Lewisburg, Pa.: 1998).
- WOODS S., *Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet* (Oxford: 1999).
- WYNNE-DAVIES M., *Women Writers and Familial Discourse* (New York: 2007).

WOMEN AND LITERARY SOCIABILITY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LISBON

Vanda Anastácio

In 1843, when he was 80 years old, the Portuguese poet Francisco Joaquim Bingre (1763–1856) wrote *As Mulheres*, a heroic poem dedicated to the excellence of women.¹ In the poem's three cantos (*The Graces*, *The Weapons*, and *The Loves*),² he mentions a number of contemporary women writers. The countess of Vimieiro (1739–after 1793), the countess of Oeynhausen (1750–1839), the vice-countess of Balsemão (1749–1824) and Francisca Possolo da Costa (1783–1838) are praised in his verse, and their names are accompanied by footnotes providing information about their literary activities. Given the silence of Portuguese historiography about women writers living before 1900, these footnotes are extremely important for anyone wishing to gain a picture of the country's literary field between 1750 and 1840.

We can read, for instance, in the footnote about the countess of Oeynhausen, who was later to be known as marquise of Alorna, that she was 'a Great Philosopher and lyrical poet, a woman of remarkable talent and outstanding liberal ideas'. Bingre recalls having been 'a frequent guest' at her home, together with 'other poets of my day'.³ When he mentions the vice-countess de Balsemão, Francisco Joaquim writes in the footnote that 'D. Catarina, vice-countess of Balsemão' was a 'very studious woman and a wonderful lyricist to whom I was often a guest and with whom I have had many poetical contests'.⁴ Finally, in the footnote referring to Francisca Possollo da Costa, he writes:

¹ Bingre F.J., "As Mulheres", in Anastácio V. (ed.), *Obras de Francisco Joaquim Bingre*, vol. 2 (Porto: 2000).

² In the original: I. *As Armas*, II. *As Graças*, and III. *Os Amores*.

³ Bingre, *Obras* 59: 'A condessa de Nhausen, grande Filósofa e grande poetisa lírica, mulher de abalizados talentos e de óptimas ideias liberais, cuja casa frequentei algumas vezes com outros poetas do meu tempo'.

⁴ *Ibid.*: 'D. Catarina, Viscondessa de Balsemão, mulher muito estudiosa e bela poetisa lírica que muito frequentei e com quem tive muitos certamens poéticos'.

Dona Francisca de Paula Possollo da Costa was born in Lisbon on October 4, 1783: she was gifted with a lot of talent and poetical genius; she could be said to be our Sappho or our Corinna. There is a volume going about called *Francília, Pastora do Tejo*, of harmonious verse, written by her: she left excellent printed works: among them, the translation of the wonderful work by Madame de Staël, *Corinna or Italy* and many others, which are in everyone's hands. She was very graceful and of docile character as well as of ultimate politeness, not only she, but also her father, Nicolau Possollo, and her mother, Dona Maria do Carmo Correia de Magalhães, were very close friends of mine.⁵

Some years later, on June 27, 1848, this same author wrote an autobiographical letter to the young poet and playwright José Maria da Costa e Silva in which he explains the way the *Academia de Belas Letras* (also known as *Nova Arcádia*) was born. When trying to recall the approximate date of his first acquaintance with his fellow poet Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage (1765–1805), he states:

At that time I stayed in Lisbon, where, together with some old friends of mine we started our *Arcadia*, myself, Belchior Curvo de Semedo Torres de Sequeira and Joaquim Severino Ferraz de Campos being its foundational cornerstones; I was the first member, Belchior, the second, the third was Joaquim Severino, who was the secretary of that Academy, which had the title of *Academia de Belas Letras de Lisboa*; and then, when Bocage came from India, he met me and started a great friendship with me, and he entered into our Academy, as well as a lot of others, holding the first sessions in private homes, and some in the palace of the countess of Vimieiro; and every Wednesday we would meet at the house of the count of Pombeiro in Caldas's room: these were called *Lereno's Wednesdays*. There, after a wonderful lunch, some amateur instruments were played and Caldas would improvise singing, and we would read the works written to be read in the Academy; upon the demand of the Police Intendant Pina Manique, the Academy was later transferred to the Castle of São Jorge where we have celebrated Grand sessions, and we were invited for one, which was extraordinary, at the Court, at the Palace of Ajuda, to honour the birth of the princess Dona Maria Teresa. In that session the presidential speech was given by Doctor José Tomás da Silva Costa Quintanilha, and the closing one by José Agostinho [...] This was the origin of our Academy [...].⁶

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Letter quoted by Braga T., *Bocage. Sua Vida e Obra Litteraria* (Porto: 1902) 164–165.

These accounts state a fact which has often been underestimated or even silenced by later literary historians: the intense circulation of texts that was going on in Lisbon in the second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century by means of reciting, reading aloud and improvisation during social meetings taking place at the homes of women writers and attended by men and women intellectuals. These meetings, which contemporaries called *assembleias*, started to come into fashion in the decades following the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, and their vogue lasted until the 1840s.

Thanks to the work of Maria Antónia Lopes, Maria de Lurdes Lima dos Santos and Maria Alexandre Lousada we know more today about this new form of sociability.⁷ One should note that in all known cases, the women presiding at these meetings were married and were accompanied by their husbands. They usually received once a week. During the *assembleias* a light meal would be served. Together with the reading aloud of texts and improvisation of poetry, the playing of music, singing and dancing were also part of the entertainment. Though apparently informal, these occasions were in fact directed to an exclusive society, for the only way to be admitted was to be introduced by someone who was already a regular participant. In this way, texts became part of a system of social distinction, where those who knew how to write, regardless of their social background, could have access to social circles which normally would not be available to them. Men of letters of non-aristocratic origin, like Francisco Joaquim Bingre himself, for example, could make themselves noticed to patrons in this manner, and find subscribers or sponsors for their works.⁸ Being an *habitué* of the *assembleias* of a certain lady was not only seen as a sign of distinction, but also as a certification of talent.

From the documents brought to light by these researchers, it becomes clear that this kind of meeting was only possible within the framework

⁷ Lopes M.A., *Mulheres, Espaço e Sociabilidade (A Transformação dos Papéis Femininos em Portugal à Luz de Fontes Literárias (Segundamente do Século XVIII))* (Lisbon: 1989); Lima dos Santos M.L., *Intelectuais Portugueses na Primeira metade de Oitocentos* (Lisbon: 1988); and Lousada M.A., *Espaços de Sociabilidade em Lisboa: Finais do Século XVIII a 1834*, 2 vol., PhD dissertation, University of Lisbon, 1995.

⁸ The obvious example of this would be Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage (1765–1805), who obtained such a reputation in the Lisbon salons that his works were published thanks to the subscription of an impressive sample of members of the high bourgeois and aristocratic Lisbon families of the time. See the “Lista de subscritores” in Bocage M.M., *Rimas* (Lisbon: 1806).

of a deep change in social behaviour taking place in Portuguese society. Before the 1750s, women who did not belong to the working class lived in a situation of domestic confinement, leaving their homes only to attend mass or to participate in religious ceremonies, never alone. Unmarried girls stayed in one part of the house and were not to be seen by men, unless they were relatives. The separation of the sexes, still preached by the bishop of Coimbra in 1741,⁹ was also in vigour at court: during solemn banquets, men and women would eat at separate tables and did not dance with each other.

As a result of the Counter-Reformation's interpretation of Christian values, which proposed the Virgin Mary as a model for women's behaviour, imposed the cloistering of female nuns, and presented celibacy and life dedicated to prayer as the best path to salvation, female convents proliferated in Portugal during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although subject to the local (male) Church authorities, female religious communities were mostly self-governed, and women living in the cloister enjoyed greater freedom than those living in families. As Maria Antónia Lopes put it:

In the mentality of the time, women were confined to two spaces, both cloister-like: the family home and the convent, which in reality corresponded perfectly to one another. In both places the same roles were demanded: the exclusive dedication to the spouse (either divine or earthly) to whom personal will should be completely surrendered, austerity, work, dedication: only this kind of behaviour could justify women's existence.¹⁰

Since dedication to religion was seen as an acceptable reason to teach women how to read and write, as well as to allow them to study the rudiments of Latin,¹¹ until the second half of the eighteenth century most Portuguese female authors were nuns. Life in female monasteries

⁹ Rodrigues M.A., "As preocupações apostólicas de D. Miguel da Anunciação à luz das suas cartas pastorais", *A Mulher na Sociedade Portuguesa (Actas do Colóquio)* (Coimbra: 1986).

¹⁰ Lopes, *Mulheres* 37: 'Na mentalidade da época, as mulheres são confinadas a dois espaços ambos claustrais: a casa familiar e o convento, que na realidade se correspondem perfeitamente. Num e noutro se exigiam os mesmos papeis: a dedicação exclusiva ao esposo (divino ou terreno) a quem se entregava totalmente a vontade própria, a quem se dedicavam todos os anseios, a quem, no fundo, se glorificava. Exigia-se em ambos o silêncio, a austeridade, o trabalho, a dedicação, e só estes comportamentos conferiam às mulheres justificação existencial'.

¹¹ The Portuguese thinker Luís António Verney, for instance, in his *Verdadeiro Método de Estudar* (1746) advocated that a moderate knowledge of Latin should be taught

was comparatively more open to social exchange: it was punctuated by celebrations of religious festivities and convent anniversaries (known as *outeiros*) which attracted mostly male audiences.

The change of attitude towards socialising between men and women, which occasioned, not surprisingly, criticism and opposition by contemporaries,¹² was attributed, at the time, to the disruption caused by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, to the presence of larger numbers of foreigners in Lisbon, and to a better knowledge of the 'fashion' of other countries, especially France. Looking at the phenomenon historically, one should stress the role played in this change by the enforcement of government policies aiming at a greater proximity to social models of behaviour in northern Europe – meaning Austria and Britain, the two countries where the Prime Minister Pombal had lived as an ambassador. Although French salons were known to members of the enlightened elite, and can be considered as possible models of sociability imported from a prestigious culture, the justification Portuguese women needed to participate in social life and legitimate their presence in heterosexual gatherings seems to have been taken from 'new' Catholic ideological models, especially from St. Francis of Sales, whose ideas were repeatedly quoted, not only by women intellectuals, but by lawmakers (as in the 1771 regulations of public theatres).

Most women authors presiding at this kind of *assembleia* were aristocrats or members of the upper mercantile bourgeoisie. They acquired remarkable social impact not only through the recognition of their writing talent by their contemporaries, but also by means of their role as social attraction poles for writers, intellectuals and personalities directly or indirectly linked to political power. We often know their names through the references made to them by male contemporaries, but we know very little about their lives, and even less about their works, which, in most cases, were never printed. However, this did not prevent them from being read, discussed, quoted, glossed, or used as epigraphs by those who were interested in poetry and *belles lettres* since, at that time, the *assembleias* were one of the most efficient channels

to nuns so that they could better participate in the religious services and understand the devotional books in this language.

¹² The fashion originated a wave of popular satirical theatre plays, as pointed out by Lopes. For an inventory of these plays, see Barata J.O. – Pericão M.G., *Catálogo da Literatura de Cordel* (Lisbon: 2006).

of text diffusion. Let me illustrate what I have just been saying with three examples.

A Discreet Activity: Teresa de Mello Breyner and Joana Isabel Forjaz

Teresa de Mello Breyner was born in 1739, but the date of her death remains unknown. She became the fourth countess of Vimieiro through her marriage to Dom Sancho de Faro in 1769. From the statement made by Bingre in the above quotation, we know that the poets of the *Academia de Belas Letras* used to meet at her home by the late 1780s, but according to the references made by other contemporaries, her literary activity must have started at least ten years earlier. The texts dedicated to her by the Arcadian poets António Dinis da Cruz e Silva (1731–1799), António Ribeiro dos Santos (1745–1818), Nicolau Tolentino (1722–1804), Filinto Elísio (1734–1819) and Domingos Maximiano Torres (1748–1810) as well as by younger poets like Domingos Caldas Barbosa (1738–1800) or Bingre himself, are proof of the poetical exchanges she maintained with authors from various generations.

Dona Teresa was a frequent visitor to the future marquise of Alorna, Dona Leonor de Almeida Portugal, while she was imprisoned in the convent of Chelas. Since Dona Leonor was the granddaughter of the marquis and marquise of Távora, who had been publicly executed in 1759¹³ after being accused of participating in the attempt on the life of King José I, she was confined in the convent of São Félix, together with her mother and her sister, for eighteen years. Dona Teresa was probably one of the persons responsible for the circulation, among men and women intellectuals in the 1770s, of the poetry of the young Dona Leonor – also known by the pen-name Alcipe. But her own texts, too, were widely read, and in her letters to Dona Leonor she confesses to having hidden her poetical identity under several pseudonyms.¹⁴ However, in spite of the celebrity she acquired in her day, her poetical works remain almost unknown. Only a few manuscript poems have been preserved, and some were included in the works of contemporary authors.¹⁵ In 1788, Dona Teresa participated anonymously

¹³ The attempt took place in Lisbon on the September 3, 1758.

¹⁴ Anastácio V. (ed.), *Cartas de Lília e Tirse (1771–1777)* (Lisbon: 2007).

¹⁵ Maffre C. *L'Oeuvre satyrique de Nicolau Tolentino* (Paris: 1994).

in a contest proposed by the Lisbon Academy of Sciences, with a theatre play called *Osmia*. She was the winner of the Academy's prize, and for decades there were doubts about the true authorship of her text.¹⁶ After being widowed in 1793, Dona Teresa retired to the convent of Santos, where she professed on July 27, 1794¹⁷ and later became a prioress, remaining in the convent until her death.

Another woman writer who presided at *assembleias* was Joana Isabel Forjaz de Lencastre. Born in 1745, she was the daughter of a nobleman.¹⁸ At the age of thirteen she married (on May 7, 1758) the 51-year-old aristocrat Fernando Martins Freire de Andrade e Castro, with whom she had five children. Her literary activity is documented at the beginning of the 1770s and seems to have stopped abruptly after the death of her husband around 1775. The date of her death remains unknown. Among the male intellectuals who mentioned her are Nicolau Tolentino, Basílio da Gama (1740–1795), Domingos Caldas Barbosa, the poet known as Principal Botelho, Manuel Inácio Silva Alvarenga (1749–1814) as well as the writer and mathematician José Anastácio da Cunha (1744–1787), with whom she exchanged some correspondence. In the papers of the Inquisition proceedings against José Anastácio, a letter is preserved which was sent to him in 1775 by Joana Isabel, where she mentions having received poems he had sent to her: 'Your verse, which I have been reading many times, and in which I have been finding new beauty every time, is enough to bring great merit to its Author'.¹⁹ When questioned by the Inquisitors about a possible friendship with this lady, Anastácio da Cunha answered that he had visited her 'a few times with ceremony in occasions where she was surrounded by other visitors', which seems to be an allusion to his presence in the *assembleias* at her home. The preserved correspondence of the marquise of Alorna shows that in the 1770s there

¹⁶ See, for instance, the speculations made by Denis F., *Résumé de l'histoire littéraire du Portugal, suivi du résumé de l'histoire littéraire du Brésil* (Paris: 1826); Sismondi S., *De la littérature du Midi de l'Europe*, vol. 4 (Paris – Strasburg: 1813); and Freire de Carvalho F., *Primeiro Ensaio sobre a História Literária de Portugal, desde a sua mais Remota Origem até o Presente Tênto, Seguindo de Diferentes Opúsculos, que servem para sua Maior Illustração, e offerecido aos Amadores da Literatua Portuguesa em Todas as Nações* (Lisbon: 1845).

¹⁷ Barros T.L. *Escritoras de Portugal. Génio feminino revelado na Literatura Portuguesa*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: 1924).

¹⁸ Topa F., *A Musa Trovadora* (Porto: 2000).

¹⁹ Braga T., *História da Literatura Portuguesa. Os Arcades* (Lisbon: 2006). 260. Letter transcribed by Ferro J.P., *O Processo de José Anastácio da Cunha na Inquisição de Coimbra (1778)* (Lisbon: 1987).

was a poetic rivalry between the two ladies, stimulated by groups of poets who took sides for each of them, in spite of the fact that Dona Leonor de Almeida was living in the Chelas convent at the time, and that, back then, they barely knew each other. Thanks to the research of Francisco Topa, we now know around ten poems attributable to her.²⁰ Unfortunately this corpus is still insufficient for a valid grasp of her work.

In comparison with the lack of information about the above-mentioned writers, the relative abundance of information about Dona Leonor de Almeida Portugal, also known as marquise of Alorna or Alcipe (1750–1839), as well as Francisca Possolo da Costa (1783–1838), forms a marked contrast. Both were women authors who organised *assembleias* at their homes, and were at the centre of text exchange networks until the 1830s. Unlike the previous examples, most of their works have been preserved and both had their biographies written by contemporaries. However, significant aspects of their lives have also been silenced.

Dona Leonor de Almeida Portugal, Marquise of Alorna

The first known biography of the marquise of Alorna is the “Notícia Biografica” published as an introduction to the first and only edition of her complete works, published in 1844.²¹ This text, probably authored by her daughters Henriette and Frérique, was clearly written with the intention of projecting an image of the representative of a particular social class: it pays special attention to Dona Leonor’s genealogy as well as her husband’s, it enumerates the distinctions and honours she received during her lifetime from princes, kings and the Pope, and emphasises the injustice of her forced confinement in the monastery of Chelas. Underlying her remarkable culture and spiritual strength – said to be *varonil* (translatable as ‘manly’ or ‘man-like’), this first biography would become the basis for the ones that followed, and the adjective

²⁰ Topa F., *A Musa Trovadora. Dispersos e Inéditos de Joana Isabel de Lencastre Forjaz* (Porto: 2002), and Topa F., “Dois sonetos inéditos de D. Joana Isabel de Lencastre Forjaz”, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras – Línguas e Literaturas*, 2nd series, 19 (2002) 541–543.

²¹ *Obras Poéticas de D. Leonor d’Almeida Portugal Lorena e Lencastre, Marquiza d’Alorna, Condessa d’Assumar e d’Oeynhausen, Conhecida entre os Poetas Portuguezes pello Nome de Alcipe*, 6 vols. (Lisbon: 1844).



Fig. 1. Franz Joseph Pitschmann, Portrait of Dona Leonor de Almeida Portugal, marquise of Alorna, painted in Vienna, 1780. Image © Fundação das Casas de Fronteira e Alorna

varonil which, let us not forget, was meant to be flattering, was to be frequently used to characterise the marquise of Alorna as someone exceptional among the women of her time.

This was done in 1869, for instance, by A.A. Teixeira de Vasconcellos in the chapter he dedicated to her in his book *Glórias Portuguezas* (*Portuguese Glories*).²² In his case, the expression *alma viril* (translatable as ‘virile soul’ or ‘man-like soul’) is associated with the category of *nationality* (she was the woman who best represented the Portuguese ‘national feeling and manners’), as well as with qualities that were considered to be inherent to feminine behaviour from the point of view of that time: he writes, for instance, that ‘no-one showed knowledge less, nor manifested such unaffected modesty’.²³

In her book *Marquesa de Alorna* published in 1907, Olga Morais Sarmiento refrains from making value judgments,²⁴ but in 1912, Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, who was the first woman admitted to the Portuguese Academy of Sciences, presented to the Academy a memoir on Dona Leonor where she states that ‘The two predominant qualities of this woman’s intelligence are the almost manly (*viril*) vigour of trained thought, and the extreme knowledge acquired during the long years of her captivity’.²⁵ As we can see, this critic reuses the adjective previously chosen by biographers and historians but, in her reasoning, she puts forward another idea: that there were strong boundaries imposed on women writers in Dona Leonor’s time. Maria Amália says, in what seems to be an attempt to distance herself from her object of study: ‘[...] the suffocating and half-barbarian Portugal of the time did

²² Vasconcellos A.A.T., *Glórias Portuguezas* (Lisbon: 1869), states: ‘Entre as mulheres do século passado, e no que vac correndo, que representaram mais fielmente o sentimento e os costumes nacionaes foi a principal D. Leonor de Almeida, Marqueza de Alorna, a brilhante poetisa da velha monarchia, e a veneranda fidalga, honra da corte portugueza nos primeiros anos da dynastia constitucional’ (116).

²³ Vasconcellos, *Glórias* 153: ‘Foi das mais illustres entre as damas portuguezas do século passado e do presente. Ninguém conhecia melhor que ella as línguas mortas e vivas e a litteratura antiga e moderna; ninguém fazia menor alarde de saber nem manifestava tão desaffecteda modéstia. Era ornamento da corte, honra da sua família e da pátria’.

²⁴ Silveira O.M.S., *Mulheres Ilustres. A Marqueza de Alorna (Sua Influência na Sociedade Portuguesa 1750–1839)* (Lisbon: 1907).

²⁵ Carvalho M.A.V., “A Marqueza de Alorna. A Sociedade e a Literatura do seu Tempo”, *Boletim da Segunda Classe da Academia das Sciencias* (1912) 322–323: ‘As duas qualidades predominantes desta inteligência de mulher são o vigor quasi viril do pensamento experimentado, e a extrema cultura adquirida em longos anos de prisão’.

not have a place to offer to a woman writer, to a woman of superior talent and of high and open-minded criteria'.²⁶

The fact that Dona Leonor was a woman seemed to condition, also, most of the appreciations found in the chapter dedicated to her by Thereza Leitão de Barros in her 1924 book *Esckriptoras de Portugal*.²⁷ This critic refers to her as an 'extraordinary woman who, by her decisive influence over so many male talents, managed to be among us the unmistakable representative of the feminine "haute gamme" of the salons'.²⁸ And when she refers to Dona Leonor's biography, she considers it 'ruled by a strong will and perfumed by a fragile grace', even going so far as to say that her life was 'her major work'.²⁹ Paradoxically, when Barros mentions the 1844 edition of the marquise of Alorna's poetry, she cannot avoid judging it according to her own perspective of what feminine psychology and behaviour should be like, attributing to Dona Leonor a 'fever of ostentation'³⁰ and uttering this damning verdict:

If there is anything which could explain her extreme poetic fecundity, it is the stimulus born from a natural emulation, or from a little and very human vanity which, since she was acting as the supreme female intellectual, did not allow her to be silent or wait until a source of sincere and emotive inspiration touched her art with a deep and pleasant mark of spontaneity.³¹

In 1933, Hernâni Cidade also published a long essay on the the marquise of Alorna where we can find the same idea of the roles women should play in society. He underlines, for instance, that 'even in her literary works she knew how to be a daughter, a wife, a mother, a sister – with a spontaneous tenderness which, far from being framed by the page read, overflows onto the page to be written'.³² When studying Dona Leonor's texts he says he sees in them the 'beautiful and proud silhouette in which feminine grace is married to that man-like (*viril*) energy which, avoiding sentimental exaggeration, inspires in her a noble love for culture, for freedom – and a man-like (*másculo*) hatred

²⁶ Carvalho, "A Marquesa de Alorna" 382.

²⁷ Barros, *Esckriptoras de Portugal*.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 45.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 59.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 61.

³¹ *Ibid.* 60.

³² Cidade H., *A Marqueza de Alorna. Sua Vida e Obras. Reprodução de Algumas Cartas Inéditas* (Porto: 1933).

for the despotism from which she was a victim',³³ a sentence which seems to be an attempt to fuse into one image the characteristics considered to be typical of each gender. Finally, using the same flattering adjective used *en passant* in the first biography of Dona Leonor, he considers her as the owner of a 'manly (*viril*) soul, by hereditary constitution and by the temper received from life'.³⁴ As we can see, these historians tried to make the life and the works of Dona Leonor fit into the slot then reserved for women in discourse about literature, and silenced the aspects of her activities which did not correspond to them.

As a consequence, it was not until very recently that attention was paid to the readings of her youth, which were quite surprising in terms of the number of forbidden books on the most varied themes to which she managed to have access.³⁵ The same silence obscured an understanding of the implications of the fact that, when she was incarcerated in the monastery of Chelas, although being an unmarried young girl and a prisoner of state, the young Alcipe presided at meetings which, except for her mother, her sister, and her friend Dona Teresa of Vimieiro, were almost exclusively attended by men – something that was only possible because, as time went by, she had become a symbol of the oppression and despotism of the marquês of Pombal, the Prime Minister who had condemned her grandparents without trial.

Because of the very circumstances of her birth, Dona Leonor's life was intimately linked to the political events of her time. She was very conscious of this, and tried, on more than one occasion, to influence their course. However, the true dimension of her political involvement is still unknown. There are many doubts surrounding several circumstances of her biography, such as her real involvement with the French general Henri Forestier and the French counter-revolutionaries; the motives of her exile in 1803; the sort of activities she was engaging in during her stay in London between 1784 and 1814, and so on.

The same prejudice seems to have been responsible for some hurried judgments which the facts seem to contradict. Because she always said she was monarchic, critics assumed the marquise of Alorna should

³³ Cidade, *A Marquês de Alorna* 77.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 79.

³⁵ See, on the subject, Anastácio V., "Perigos do Livro. (Apontamentos acerca do papel atribuído ao livro e à leitura na correspondência da Marquês de Alorna durante o período de encerramento em Chelas)", *Românica* 13 (2004) 125–141.

be conservative. However, she protected at least one member of the liberal party who was being persecuted for his ideas during the conservative absolutist government of Dom Miguel I,³⁶ and the meetings she organised at her home after moving back to Lisbon in 1814 were attended by intellectuals of the most varied ideologies: liberals, freemasons, Catholics as well as members of the successive governments in power before and after the liberal revolution of 1820, would socialise with political exiles from different periods. Another hasty judgment seems to have been the assumption that she had always remained a conservative Catholic. Yet her works and even her translation of Laménais in 1820, which is presented in the preface as a ‘fight’ against ‘the pernicious maxims which seduce today’s inexperienced youth’, show a permanent desire for conciliation between the new ‘revolutionary’ philosophical principles, and the Church’s doctrine.³⁷

It is true, nonetheless, that the countess of Oeynhausen tried to protect herself from her contemporaries’ possible lack of understanding by avoiding publishing her poetry and by selecting very cautiously the works she allowed to be printed. These decisions seem to have been taken according to criteria which privileged those texts which could be considered didactical, politically useful or dedicated to spiritual edification. As a matter of fact, in 1812 her translations of Horace’s *Poetics* and Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Criticism* were printed semi-anonymously (with the indication ‘por uma portugueza’, ‘by a Portuguese woman’) and, in 1814, her translation of Chateaubriand’s *De Bonaparte et des Bourbons* was published in London with the same enigmatic authorial information. But in 1817 and 1833, she published under her own name the verse translation of 75 texts from the Bible’s *Book of Psalms* and in 1820 she published a translation of Laménais’s *Essai sur l’indifférence en matière de religion*.

Francisca de Paula Possollo da Costa

Francisca de Paula Possollo da Costa, who was 33 years younger than Dona Leonor de Almeida Portugal, was born in Lisbon, on October

³⁶ Guimarães J.R., “Recordações da Marquesa de Alorna”, *Sumário de Vária História* (Lisbon: 1874) 213–216.

³⁷ Oeynhausen, “Dedicatória a El-Rei N. Senhor”, *Ensaio sobre a Indiferença em Matéria de Religião* (Lisbon: 1820).

4, 1783. She was the daughter of a businessman, and grew up in a socially privileged entourage. According to her biographer António Feliciano de Castilho, as a young girl Francisca studied music and French, and it was only later, on her own initiative, that she enlarged the variety and scope of her readings.³⁸

Just like Joana Isabel Forjaz and Dona Teresa de Mello Breyner, it was only after her marriage in 1813 with João Baptista Ângelo da Costa that Francisca acquired a relevant role among Lisbon intellectuals. Her husband was an ex-navy officer who had exchanged his career for a place in business, and kept close relationships with intellectuals and politicians of the liberal party. According to their contemporaries, there was a private theatre in the couple's own residence in Lisbon, where French theatre plays (translated or adapted by Francisca herself) were performed – sometimes with the hostess as one of the actresses – for an audience of family and friends.³⁹ Between her marriage and the death of her husband João Baptista, she received men and women intellectuals of different generations at her *assembleias*. We know that the marquise of Alorna (1750–1839), Bingre's contemporary and former member of *Academia de Belas Letras* Belchior Curvo Semedo (1766–1838), as well as some major Portuguese authors of the younger generation like António Feliciano de Castilho (1800–1875), Alexandre Herculano (1810–1877) and Almeida Garrett (1799–1854) attended these. So did Domingos Borges de Barros (1780–1855), a Brazilian-born young deputy who pleaded in favour of the right to vote for women for the first time in the Portuguese Parliament in 1820. Like Joana Isabel, Francisca de Paula interrupted her social life after her husband's death in 1829, and retired to a family property in Cartaxo, where she died on June 19, 1838.

Besides playing an important role as cultural mediator, ensuring interaction between contemporary men and women of letters, Possollo da Costa was also the author of a diversified work, with incursions into genres like the melodrama and the novel, which were then considered in Portugal as improper for the feminine sphere. Unlike other contemporary women writers, Dona Francisca had most of her

³⁸ Castilho A.F. “Notícia Literária acerca da Sra. D. Francisca de Paula Possollo da Costa”, in Fontenelle B. de, *Conversações acerca da Pluralidade dos Mundos* (Lisbon: 1841) V–CXXXII, reprinted in Castilho A.F. *Vivos e Mortos*, vol. 1 (Lisbon: 1904) 61–155. I quote the latter.

³⁹ Castilho J. *Memórias de Castilho*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: 1881).

works published during her lifetime. Nevertheless, they appeared in an almost anonymous way, signed with the cryptic initials D.F.P.P.C. (Dona Francisca de Paula Possollo da Costa). This was the case of the collection of poems *Francília, Pastora do Tejo*, published in 1816, which, according to António Feliciano de Castilho, was printed 'in a small number of copies' and graciously distributed 'among friends'. This work seems to have had a considerable impact, however, if we take into account the allusions made to it by contemporaries. The same care in signing with initials can be seen in the case of her novel *Henriqueta de Orleães*, published in 1819, with a second edition in 1829. In 1835 she continued to hide behind her initials when she published a translation of Madame de Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie*.⁴⁰ If signing with initials can be seen as a manifestation of what could be considered, then, as the 'modesty' appropriate to her sex, this was not the only authorial strategy used by Francisca. In 1826 and 1827 she printed under her name three short anthologies of political and patriotic sonnets she had recited, on the stage of the São Carlos Theatre of Lisbon, celebrating the proclamation of the Constitutional Charter, the first constitution of the Portuguese monarchy.⁴¹

The first and still the most complete known biography of Francisca de Paula was written by António Feliciano de Castilho in 1841. This text became the main source of the relatively rare works which mentioned her after her death.⁴² An attentive reading of this text shows that it corresponds to a real process of 'image-whitening', attenuating or eliminating aspects which could be judged as less proper of the expected behaviour of women. Castilho admits, for instance, that

⁴⁰ *Corinna ou a Italia por Madame de Staël-Holstein. Traduzido por D.F.P.P.C.* (Lisbon: 1834).

⁴¹ *Sonetos compostos pela Illm^a Snr^a D. Francisca Possóllo da Costa, recitados no Real Theatro de S. Carlos, e mandados imprimir por A...R...* (Lisbon: 1826); *Sonetos compostos por D. Francisca Possóllo da Costa, e recitados no Real Theatro de S. Carlos* (Lisbon: 1826); and *Sonetos compostos pela Illustrissima Senhora D. Francisca Possóllo da Costa, / recitados no Real Theatro de S. Carlos, e mandados imprimir por A...R...* (Lisbon: 1827).

⁴² Silva I.F. "D. Francisca Possolo", *O Panorama* 2, 2 (1834) 109–110; Silva I.F. "Francisca de Paula Possolo da Costa", *Diccionario Bibliographico Portuguez*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: 1859) 318; Costa A., *A Mulher em Portugal* (Lisbon: 1892) 241–250; Barros T.L. "Francília e Natércia", *Escritoras de Portugal*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: 1924) 93–105; Lima dos Santos M. L., *Intelectuais Portugueses na Primeira Metade de Oitocento* (Lisbon: 1988); Silveira P., "Francisca Possolo da Costa", *Diccionario do Romantismo Literário Português* (Lisbon: 1997).

Francisca had been an actress, but he justifies it as a *proof of her good taste* and underlines the fact that she only performed in private:

Proof of her good taste was (in my opinion) that although it was, and it is still today, a general custom that only men participate in this kind of private entertainments, not only did she act, but she pushed to acting those of her girlfriends and relatives in whom she found more ability; and there was not the least inconvenience in this, for the virtue of those she chose was such, and such was the judgment of those who were present, the kind of relationships among all, the hereditary probity of that house, and the vigilance of its owners. In this way, and with no offense to good manners nor any tarnish to her reputation, the most tasteless of all tasteless things ever invented in this world, the most unnatural, the most absurd and unbearable was avoided, which is the *damas machas* [transvestite male actors performing female roles in the theatre].⁴³

When this critic recalls that this same lady used to write poems, and to organise and preside at *assembleias* at her home, he does not forget to emphasise that this did not interfere in any way with her ‘modesty’, explaining that ‘in the presence of men, she was happy to look like a woman; among women, she made an effort to equal them, by shortening and hiding with great industry her own height’.⁴⁴

In spite of the fact that she had written and publicly recited political poems acclaiming Dom Pedro IV, the Constitutional Charter and freedom of opinion, as mentioned above, Castilho denies the fact that Dona Francisca may have had any political opinions, saying: ‘Political opinions were not mentioned there, for neither did men make politics for women, nor did God make women for politics’,⁴⁵ even suggesting: ‘Let the home be for men a forum for political meetings, a field for

⁴³ Castilho, “Notícia Literária” 95: ‘Outra prova do seu bom juízo e gosto de sua dona era (em meu entender) que, sendo, como ainda hoje é costume geralmente recebido, que n’esse genero de divertimentos particulares não figurem senão homens, não só representava ella, mas fazia representar aquellas de suas parentas e amigas, em quem sentia mais habiliidade; e não n’isto inconveniencia, que era tanta a virtude das por tal mão escolhidas, o juizo dos com quem lidavam, as relações que entre todos havia, a probidade hereditaria da casa, e a vigilancia dos donnos d’ella.

Por este modo, sem offensa dos bons costumes, nem quebra de fama, se evitava o mais sensabor de todos os sensabores inventos que ao mundo teem vindo, o mais desnatural, o mais absurdo e insoffrivel, que é o das *damas machas*’.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 147: ‘Perante homens, se contentava de parecer mulher; entre mulheres, forcejava por se lhes egualar, encolhendo e dissimulando com muita indústria a sua própria altura’.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 149: ‘De politicas opiniões não se havia aqui de falar, porque nem os homens fizeram a Política para as mulheres, nem Deus as mulheres para a Política’.

civil fights, the even more tumultuous *alcácer* of the Parliaments; their home will be, for women, city, kingdom and world'.⁴⁶

In spite of the intense social activity of this woman as a poet, novel writer and translator, António Feliciano de Castilho seems to want to reduce to a minimum the possible range of her intellectual productions when he concludes that, in his opinion, her best works *were the ones she did not write*. He says, in fact:

Conversation is an extremely difficult science, which participates of many sciences, or of all of them, which can neither be taught, nor learned, which has more qualities of inspiration, than of industry, and the gift of this talent is even more rare than the extremely rare talent of writing well. This gift, this talent, this science she possessed to the utmost degree, joining to the merit of speaking well, the luck of a clear voice, melodious and varied, which naturally changed and tempered itself, very naturally, according to the colours of the ideas she represented, and the heat of the affections she expressed.

In this way we can say that the best, and most really unique of her works were the ones she did not write, and could never write.⁴⁷

Conclusion

These four examples illustrate the paradoxical situation of women writers and intellectuals living in Portugal during the second half of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. Although they were recognised as authors, they were not treated by posterity as equals to their male peers. In the cases mentioned, we are dealing with lay women, whose access to erudite culture was only possible through extensive, self-determined reading, thus showing how women's access to literacy opened the way to self-didacticism.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 149: 'Seja para elles casa a praça dos comícios, o campo das peijas civis, o Alcácer ainda mais tumultuário dos Parlammentos; que para ellas será cidade, reino, e mundo, a casa'.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 153: 'É a conversação uma sciencia difficultotissima, que participa de muitas sciencias, ou de todas, que nem se ensina nem se aprende, que tem mais visos de inspiração, que de industria, e cujo don é por ventura ainda mais raro, que o rarissimo de bem escrever. E este don, esta prenda, esta sciencia, possuía ella no summo grau, acrescentando o merito de bem dizer com a felicidade de uma voz clara, melodiosa, variada, e que por si mesma se matisava e temperava, mui ao natural, com as cores das ideias que representava, com o calor dos affectos que exprimia.

Por este modo as melhores, e podemos dizer, as inimitáveis de suas obras, foram as que não escreveu, nem podia escrever'.

Noting the common characteristics found in these four women's trajectories can be especially illustrative, for they were all passionate readers and independent learners. Also, with the exception of the marquise of Alorna (who grew up as a prisoner of state and had played a relevant role before marrying and after being widowed), active participation in the intellectual field was only accessible to them after they married, and just as long as they remained under the 'tutorship' of their husbands. Common to all these women as well seem to have been the conscience of the contemporary social constraints they should submit to, as well as a mixed attitude of both respect and conscious play with the ambiguity of the notions of domesticity and of privacy, or even with current female stereotypes.

Disseminating poems in craft-like manual copies among private and semi-private circles of readers, performing in private theatres for chosen audiences, publishing anonymously, as well as signing with pseudonyms or initials easily deciphered by friends and acquaintances but opaque to the general reader, were some of the most popular strategies used by women writers at the time. These strategies explain in part their invisibility to later historians but, as illustrated above, women's participation was often minimised, 'whitewashed', distorted or simply erased by literary historians either because they could not conceive that certain roles had been performed by women, or because they were trying to protect their reputation through the construction of an image posterity could revere.

Finally, it seems clear that in order to understand the way in which these women contributed to the cultural field of their time, acting as producers, promoters, and disseminators of texts, or using their position in society to act as cultural mediators and (as we would say today) 'idea-makers', it is necessary to recuperate the data still available about them, in official records as well as in private, less visible documents, but this task cannot be effective without interrogating these sources, and questioning the very categories used to describe women's actions, women's texts, and women's roles.

Selective Bibliography

- ANASTÁCIO V., *A Marquesa de Alorna (1750–1839). Estudos* (Lisbon: 2009).
- (ed., with Almeida T. – Almeida Flor J. – Bello Vazquez R. – Delille M. – Miranda T. – Monteiro N.), *Cartas de Lília e Tirse* (Lisbon: 2007).
- , “Francisca Possolo da Costa”, in Osório de Castro Z. – Ferreira de Sousa A. (eds.), *Dicionário no Feminino (Séculos XIX–XX)* (Lisbon: 2005) 354–355.
- BARROS T.L., *Escritoras de Portugal, Génio Feminino revelado na Literatura Portuguesa*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: 1924).
- BELLO VÁZQUEZ R., *Uma certa Ambição de Glória. Trajectória, Redes e Estratégias de Teresa de Mello Breyner nos Campos Intelectual e do Poder em Portugal (1770–1798)* (Santiago de Compostela: 2005).
- BENJAMIN W., “Theses on the Philosophy of History”, ed. H. Arendt, *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections* (New York: 1968) 253–264.
- BOLAMA M. DE A., *A Marquês d’Alorna. Algumas Notícias Authenticas para a História da Muito Illustre e Eminente Escripтора* (Lisbon: 1916).
- BRAGA T., *Bocage, sua Vida e Obra Litteraria* (Porto: 1902).
- CARVALHO F.F., *Primeiro Ensaio sobre História Litteraria de Portugal, desde a sua mais Remota Origem até o Presente Tempo, seguindo Diferentes Opúsculos, que servem para sua Maior Illustração, e offerecido aos Amadores da Literatura Portuguesa em Todas as Nações* (Lisbon: 1845).
- CARVALHO M.A.V., “A Marquesa de Alorna. Sociedade e a Literatura do seu Tempo”, *Boletim da Segunda Classe da Academia das Ciências* (1912) 313–459.
- CASTILHO A.F., “Notícia Literária acerca da Sra. D. Francisca de Paula Possolo da Costa”, in *Vivos e Mortos*, vol. 1 (Lisbon: 1904) 61–155.
- CASTILHO J., *Memórias de Castilho*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: 1881).
- CIDADE H., *A Marquês de Alorna. Sua Vida e Obras. Reprodução de Algumas Cartas Inéditas* (Porto: 1933).
- COSTA A., *A Mulher em Portugal* (Lisbon: 1892).
- DENIS F., *Resumé de l’histoire littéraire du Portugal, suivi du resumé de l’histoire littéraire du Brésil* (Paris: 1826).
- FERRO J.P., *O Processo de José Anastácio da Cunha na Inquisição de Coimbra (1778)* (Lisbon: 1987).
- GODINHO V.M., “História e Ciências Sociais”, in *Ensaio III – Sobre Teoria e História e Historiografia* (Lisbon: 1971).
- GUIMARAES J.R., “Recordações da Marquesa de Alorna”, *Summario de Vária História* (Lisbon: 1874) 213–216.
- LAMENAIS, *Ensaio sobre a Indiferença em Matéria de Religião* (Lisbon: 1820).
- LOPES M.A., *Mulheres, Espaço e Sociabilidade (A transformação dos Papéis Femininos em Portugal à Luz de Fontes Literárias (Segunda Metade do Século XVIII)* (Lisbon: 1989).
- LOUSADA M.A., *Espaços de Sociabilidade em Lisboa: Finais do século XVIII a 1834* (PhD dissertation, University of Lisbon: 1995).
- MAFFRE C., *L’oeuvre satirique de Nicolau Tolentino* (Paris: 1994).
- VASCONCELLOS A.A.T., *Glórias Portuguesas* (Lisbon: 1869).
- LIMA DOS SANTOS M.L., *Intelectuais Portugueses na Primeira metade de Oitocentos* (Lisbon: 1988).
- SILVA I.F., “D. Francisca Possollo”, *O Panorama* 2, 2 (1843) 109–110.
- SILVEIRA O.M.S., *Mulheres Illustres. A Marquês de Alorna (Sua Influência na Sociedade Portuguesa) (1750–1839)* (Lisbon: 1907).
- SILVEIRA P., “Francisca Possolo da Costa”, *Dicionário do Romantismo Literário Português* (Lisbon: 1997).
- SISMONDI S., *De La littérature du Midi de l’Europe*, vol. 4 (Paris: 1813).
- TOPA F., *A Musa Trovadora. Dispersos e Inéditos de Joana Isabel de Lencastre Forjaz* (Porto: 2000).
- , “Dois Sonetos Inéditos de D. Joana Isabel de Lencastre Forjaz”, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras – Línguas e Literaturas* series 2, 19 (2002) 541–543.

APPROPRIATING LITERARY GENRE

FEMALE WRITING AND THE USE OF LITERARY BYWAYS.
PASTORAL DRAMA BY MADDALENA
CAMPIGLIA (1553–1595)

Philippe Bossier

Contemporary research on the various aesthetical techniques in post-Tridentine Italian art and literature testifies to a growing interest in the work of Maddalena Campiglia (Vicenza, 1553–1595).¹ Apart from the modern edition² of part of her oeuvre both in Italian and in translation, quite a number of essays emphasize the importance of this writer, who always lived on the fringes of her hometown's renowned *Accademia Olimpica*.³ And yet in spite of this increasing scholarly attention

¹ The most important studies so far are: Perrone C., “‘So che donna amo donna...’: La Calisa di Maddalena Campiglia”, in *Les femmes écrivains en Italie au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* (Provence: 1994) 293–31; Peronne C., “‘So che donna amo donna’: La Calisa di Maddalena Campiglia” (Lecce: 1996); Mammama S., “Ipotesi per l’attribuzione di due madrigali cinquecenteschi”, *Studi Italiani* 1 (2000) 127–132; Chemello A., “‘Donne a poetar esperte’: la rimatrice dimessa Maddalena Campiglia”, *Versants* 46 (2003) 98–128. Ultsch H.L., “Ephithalamium Interruptum: Maddalena Campiglia’s New Arcadia”, *Modern Language Notes* 120 (2005) 79–92; Ultsch L., “Maddalena Campiglia, ‘dimessa nel mondano aspetto’: Secular Celibacy, Devotes Communities and Social Identity in Early Modern Vicenza”, *Forum Italicum* 2 (2005) 350–377; Sampson L., *Pastoral Drama in Early Modern Italy. The Making of a New Genre* (Oxford: 2006). See also: Bossier P., “‘Non si è fermato il desiderio che nacque in me’. Maddalena Campiglia e la ribellione alle convenzioni poetiche”, in Corsaro A. – Hendrix H. – Procaccioli P. (eds.), *Autorità, modelli e antimodelli nella cultura artistica e letteraria tra Riforma e Controriforma. Atti del Seminario internazionale di Studi* (Rome: 2007) 55–63; Bossier P., “Ambassadors of Intermediate Culture. Italian Actresses on the Early Modern Stage”, in De Vries A. (ed.), *Cultural Mediators. Artists and Writers at the Crossroads of Tradition, Innovation and Reception in the Low Countries and Italy (1450–1650)* (Louvain – Paris: 2008) 41–51.

² Campiglia M., *Flori, A Pastoral Drama. A Bilingual Edition*, ed. V. Cox – L. Sampson (Chicago: 2004).

³ The *Accademia Olimpica* is one of Italy’s most outstanding examples of the extreme density of innovative cultural life in the late Cinquecento. Founded in 1555 in the city of Vicenza, near to Padova and Venice, the *Olimpica* was a flourishing centre of artistic practices of all kind, continuous philosophical debate and even exploration of early modern science and mathematics. One of the central figures was the paramount Italian architect of the Renaissance, Andrea Palladio (1508–1580), who built the *Teatro Olimpico* (1579–80, Palladio/Scamozzi) as the main venue for his hometown Academy. Still nowadays it is considered as the earliest example (left) in modern times of an independent, wooden theatre construction. Another prominent member of the *Olimpici* is the permanent secretary from 1582, Paolo Chiappino (?1538–1593), whom Campiglia explicitly refers to in the second of the dedicatory letters preceding *Flori*.

most of the studies on the second half of the Cinquecento hardly mention her at all, which makes it hard to grasp the historical and cultural significance of this author both in a larger context and within a more precise analytical frame. The reason for this lacuna is quite simple: our present state of knowledge on the matter still lacks an essential contribution, i.e. a critical monograph⁴ that traces the specific literary function of the author who is responsible for one of the very first examples of pastoral drama in the history of this literary genre. Maddalena Campiglia wrote her play *Flori*, *favola boschereccia* (1588) only shortly after Torquato Tasso's *Aminta* (printed in 1580), which had by then become a new literary archetype (harmony and musicality of language, plot structured as a logical follow-up of units, content of emotions, celebration of beauty, psychological framing of character, reminiscence of Petrarchan metaphor, fluidity of dialogue, dramaturgical impact of scenery). Indeed, Tasso's new dramaturgical view on literature was already right after its first staging in 1573 considered the best example of a modern attempt to combine Greek tragedy and contemporary aesthetical preferences.⁵ Campiglia's work and its immediate follow-up *Calisa* (1589, another pastoral) reveal the author's similar tendency to distance herself from the available literary models of her day and like Tasso she opts for clearly alternative aesthetical outcomes, as I will try to show in the following pages. As Virginia Cox and Lisa Sampson state,

the influence of the *Aminta* is clear in the *Flori*, especially in the prologue, but Campiglia was certainly no slavish imitator of a single 'master text'. On the contrary, her writing reveals an awareness of the rich tradition of pastoral literature, which included not only drama, but also lyric verse dating back to antiquity (Virgil, Theocritus, Moschus, and Bion)

⁴ The only volume by now is the relatively uncritical De Marco G., *Maddalena Campiglia: La figura e l'opera* (Vicenza: 1988).

⁵ Indeed the authority of Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), as the son of the already famous Bernardo (1493–1569), had become a public fact because of his prestige in adding new aesthetical frameworks to established genres like the Quattrocento and Cinquecento chivalry poem at an earlier stage composed by Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441–1494) and Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533). Tasso, the greatest poet of late Italian Renaissance can indeed be best remembered for his masterpiece *La Gerusalemme Liberata* (Jerusalem Delivered, 1575, completed first version). During a long stay at the illustrious court of Ferrara, he entered the service of Cardinal Luigi d'Este and later of his brother Duke Alfonso II as a poet-in-residence. During this time he wrote the pastoral drama *Aminta* and *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, composed between 1559 and 1575.

and modern writings such as Iacopo Sanazzaro's very influential prose romance, *Arcadia* (1504).⁶

Although this assumption may be correct, there is a great need for more detailed research on the position of the Vicenza author Maddalena Campiglia within the main tendencies of post-Tridentine poetics.⁷ Any adequate attempt to reconstruct so-called mannerism or early baroque literary history should take into account Campiglia and make her emerge from the relative isolation she has been left in for centuries. In order to meet these goals, I will focus on the position of Campiglia in her intellectual environment first and then illustrate her alternative literary voice by analyzing the paratextual system of her pastoral drama. My perspective is to outline an important chapter in the monograph on Campiglia which is still to be written.

*A Writer at the Crossroads of Poetical Choices
in the Post-Tridentine Age*

Maddalena Campiglia is nowadays studied for two main reasons. First of all, because of her irregular social position in late-Cinquecento Italy. And secondly, because of her surprising literary oeuvre, which is often linked to her life story. The most striking fact of her biography is indeed her separation from her husband, the Vicentine noble Dionisio Colzè, whom she left herself after a few years of childless marriage (1576–1580), to return to the house of her deceased father. Afterwards, she organized her own life in the context of the so-called third state of secular celibacy, by linking herself – albeit again in a free way – to the Dominican nuns of the ‘Terziarie domenicane’. Since she was born – albeit illegitimately – to parents of established Vicentine noble families and because of her excellent connections with the local intelligentsia, this anomalousness of her marital situation in society seemed to be tolerated as a kind of framework accorded at least a certain degree of respect. Besides this non-conventional position in the world, Campiglia is indeed an excellent example of how a noblewoman of the social elite in early-modern Italy obtained success

⁶ Campiglia, *Flori* 13.

⁷ Post-Tridentine literary poetics, following the example of Tasso, deal with religious questions in a more explicit way, but also with questions concerning the sensuality of the human body.

in networking with the most important cultural circles, to which she almost naturally belonged. Of course the affiliations she established, especially in view of her own literary ambitions, were less difficult in a small provincial town compared to the nearby Republic of Venice, where the climate of patronage, book-market and cultural prestige was of a completely different kind, with an enormous impact on the rest of Italy. One might thus argue that a provincial intellectual environment in the Veneto was an advantage for emerging authors with a moderate ambition to become a literary voice of some esteem.

In this context, the literary work of Campiglia is at the same time modest and intriguing. Her first published work is the *Discorso sopra l'Annociatione della Beata Vergine, e la Incarnazione del S. N. Giesu Christo* (Discourse of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Vicenza 1585), followed by the already mentioned twofold exercise in the pastoral idiom, *Flori, favola boscareccia* (Vicenza: 1588) and *Calisa, egloga* (Vicenza: 1589). If this part of her oeuvre can be considered the main corpus of her texts, a very interesting contribution of hers can also be connected to the contemporary practice of anthologizing literature. She wrote a collection of four poems in the local rustic dialect for an anthology of poetry in memory of the Vicentine writer Agostino Rava. On top of this, she left a small number of occasional poems.

An important question when dealing with the use of pastoral in Campiglia's oeuvre is her relationship to Torquato Tasso as a leading model for that kind of literature in late-Cinquecento Italy and Europe. The same question arises of course as to her observance of Aristotelian poetics. It seems that Campiglia used the same intelligent mixture of free choice and respect of traditions as she did in her social environment within the elite of Vicenza. This means that not only do life and literature in her view seem to be very much linked together, but also that she can afford to dissociate herself from a dominant literary model, by adding now and then some striking but not forbidden accent in her interpretation of the model. This is the case, in *Flori*, for instance when she does not picture the setting of the plot as an a-temporal Arcadia as convention would imply. In short, Campiglia is behaving in literature exactly as was expected from all contemporary (great) authors, i.e. using the ruling principle of *Imitatio* with enough dexterity to underline one's own specific universe of imagination as a valid one next to established tradition. Nevertheless, was such a position also acceptable for women writers? And was it also the case for a debutante? What should we make of her insistence on literary freedom? What about her claim of transgression (both in literature as in society)?

In studying Campiglia, the main factor seems to be the relationship, which is so striking a matter in this author, between the allegiance to rules and the exploration of borderlines of common practice in the literary system of late-Cinquecento Italy. This is also true for her position as a female writer. On the one hand, Campiglia shows obedience to the rules of the system by respecting choice of genre and patron, textual framework and authority of models. On the other hand, she is exposing by means of a savvy and talented rhetorical exercise (as will be shown in the following pages) how very much offended she is by all kinds of stereotypes or limiting discourses in art. What she does not accept, is that feminine writing is restricted to a certain number of areas of interest (prayer, poetry, translation for instance, but pastoral drama?), outside of which any attempt to be original as a female writer is regarded with a high degree of skepticism by the literary establishment (court or academy). Many other women writers also demanded respect, but most of the time in another way, i.e. on the basis of an excellent personal contribution to an established genre, in Petrarchan poetry for instance, but leaving unquestioned the norms of a genre. To put it in a very formal way, Campiglia's predecessors mainly said 'yes' to the model and 'yes' to originality. She herself is less straightforward, in spite of appearances: it is 'yes' to originality but a mitigated yes, a kind of yes-no, to all authority. That is the reason why ambiguity lies behind this kind of literary programme which implies also a meta-level of understanding literature. It shows the limits too of her position as an author: in fact, her oeuvre is of course much more an attempt to raise an alternative voice in a local cultural background, rather than a decisive contribution to literary change in the 1580s. So, did she succeed in her plan? How far can a double-voiced discourse reach anyway? As said before, the impact of her literary strategies vis-à-vis the pastoral play might seem impressive, but even at this stage one should take into account that these texts were presented as an academic exercise of erudite declamation, rather than a real theatre performance.

It has been observed by all specialists that Campiglia's work functioned at that precise moment in the history of the Italian literary system one could call 'the expansive phase of women's writing':

By the time Campiglia came to write, a tradition of published writings by women was already well established in Italy, stimulated by the vast publishing success enjoyed by the poetry of Vittoria Colonna (1490–1547), which had first appeared in the 1530s. Although it is sometimes maintained that the tradition faded in the latter decades of the

sixteenth century as a result of the reactionary cultural policies in the Counter-Reformation, there is in fact little evidence that this was the case. Women continued to write and be published in this period, and to innovate within the tradition; indeed, it is around this time that we first see Italian women beginning to venture beyond the bounds of lyric and devotional verse, which had up to this point comprised the majority of their output, into a more varied production, including chivalric romance and epic, religious narrative, and pastoral drama. It is within this expansive and experimental phase in the history of Italian women's writing that Campiglia's oeuvre must be located.⁸

One of the questions that arises from the fact that her oeuvre is situated at the crossroad of an already established female tradition and an innovative new generation of feminine artists concerns the techniques Campiglia used in order to introduce herself as a writer. From this point of view it appears important to focus on her immediate intellectual background and to explore the possibilities of local networking. Indeed, in their introduction to the modern edition of *Flori*, Cox and Sampson stress the structural relationship between the local culture and the gradual foregrounding of the female pastoral drama within a post-Tasso tradition:

Where pastoral drama is concerned, besides the *Aminta*, Campiglia's main influences are to be sought in plays composed in her own circles, whether in Vicenza or in the sphere of influence of Isabella Pallavicino Lupi in Soragna. The latter environment is particularly important. [...] Campiglia's only predecessor as a female writer of pastoral drama, Barbara Torelli, was associated with these circles.⁹

Considering aspects as networking and strategic preference underlines the importance of the double-folded dedication in her play *Flori*, that should be interpreted accordingly. The second part of this article consists of a detailed close-reading of the dedicatory letters in the volume, which are specifically addressed to key figures in the local culture of theatre and drama.

As an almost militant writer opposed to any kind of conformism, Maddalena's well delimited and deliberate attempt to fit in both with her city's most important Accademia and with a wider, national discourse concerning literature's autonomy with respect to the accepted

⁸ Campiglia, *Flori* 1–2.

⁹ Campiglia, *Flori* 13.

norms in literature,¹⁰ is a magnificent example of female networking in Italy's early modern literature. For this reason, the relevance of Campiglia's position in the literary system is rather high. In my opinion, the case of the author of *Flori* constitutes the keystone in at least three central levels of late Cinquecento literary developments. I will explore the following items within the larger cultural background of the late Cinquecento in which Campiglia was participating: a) the redefinition of genre, b) the advent of professional theatre companies, and c) the exponential use of competitive rhetoric in female texts. In literary history these elements of cultural change have only been considered together occasionally in the case of one of the first representatives in Europe of female drama.

Redefining Genre

The first level in historical poetical change consists of the slow process of redefining literary genres in the second part of the sixteenth century. From the 1530–1540s onward Aristotelian precepts of *Poetica* definitively became the most important theoretical framework of reference, not only for understanding the works of the past but also for assessing the current literary production in Italy. Nevertheless, this general framework of reference was felt to give less and less satisfaction when it came down to works of literature which did not entirely match the examples from the classical heritage. This was the case for instance for comedy, but also for religious poetry or treatises on dance. As a consequence, Aristotle's *Poetics* were more and more framed as an exclusive work of abstract theory. In short, together with the growing success of new formulas in poetry, drama, music, dance and court entertainment, a progressive gap grew between the *auctoritas* of classical theory on the one hand and its usefulness as a guideline for modern production in culture on the other. In this context, Campiglia's work contributed in its own way to one of the most significant developments in late-Cinquecento literary history by placing pastoral drama¹¹

¹⁰ Bossier P., "Italian Actors as Agents Against Commonplaces in the Age of Counter-Reformation", in Cowling D. – Bruun M. (eds.), *The Role of Commonplaces in Western Europe* (Louvain – Paris: 2010) forthcoming.

¹¹ Guglielminetti M., "Un teatro del piacere e dell'onore", in Chiabò M. – Doglio F. (eds.), *Sviluppi della drammaturgia pastorale nell'Europa del Cinque-Seicento* (Rome: 1992)

within the Aristotelian framework from which it had seemed to escape. Indeed, being halfway between drama and eclogue (both related to ancient models) that particular form of drama does not seem to have an immediate antecedent in the Greek or Latin legacy. One might consider Virgil's bucolic prose, but then of course this is not drama. Even Tasso's *Aminta*, notwithstanding its immediate success on stage, caused some trouble when it had to be linked to an absent Greek or Latin predecessor. Moreover, this genre was not only 'refractory' to any rule, it often also staged non-neutral issues, such as the social value of marriage,¹² the ennobling act of love, the combination of golden-age ideals and the limits of the human social construction. Among other themes dealt with by pastoral drama is the necessity for man to master his animal instinct, that could manifest itself in what might seem a bucolic nature at first sight. In a word, a group of highly risky themes, due to the context of artistic control and censorship in post-Tridentine aesthetics and to the lacking guarantee of a suitable ancient model. Yet this 'negativity' of Cinquecento pastoral drama's has a decidedly positive side. If a new textual typology such as pastoral drama seems to resist any integration within theory, its 'refractory' character disappears when it is staged successfully in contemporary court culture, as was the case with Tasso's play *Aminta*. Notwithstanding the apparent instability or unfeasibility of the genre,¹³ the 1573 archetypical first performance on the Belvedere isle at the Estensi court in Ferrara established a new standard of stage conventions.

It is interesting to note in this evolution how this paradox of a new literary genre that was successful yet at the same time unstable and therefore difficult to manage, was exploited most significantly by emerging professional writers, like women writers after the 1540–1550s.

These authors managed to do so with the specific purpose to establish themselves in the quickest way possible within the literary field.

87–99; Andrews R., "Pastoral Drama", in Brand P. – Pertile L. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature* (Cambridge: 1996) 292–298; Mauri D., *Voyage en Arcadie. Sur les origines italiennes du théâtre pastoral français à l'âge baroque* (Paris: 1996); Ricco L., "Ben mille pastorali". *L'itinerario dell'Ingegneri da Tasso a Guarini e oltre* (Rome: 2004).

¹² Cox V., "The Single Self: Feminist Thought and the Marriage Market in Early Modern Venice", in *Renaissance Quarterly* 48,3 (1995) 513–581.

¹³ Tasso T., *Aminta*, ed. C. Varese (Milan: 1985); Finotti F., "La scena satiresca e l' 'Aminta' del Tasso", in Finotti F. (ed.), *Retorica della diffrazione. Bembo, Aretino, Giulio Romano e Tasso: letteratura e scena cortigiana* (Florence: 2004) 191–386; Galli Stampino M., *Aminta: Staging the Pastoral: Tasso's Aminta and the Emergence of Modern Western Theatre* (Tempe: 2005).

Thus a parallelism exists between the choice of genre and the position an artist wishes to occupy in the literary system. It can be considered a rule in literary history that, whenever authors try to get involved in ‘serious’ literary matters, they begin by taking advantage of the fluctuation of positions allowed by an unstable genre in the hierarchy of models. They will also try to explore the borderlines of a literary form that has been set as a standard by illustrious predecessors. The connection between Tasso and Campiglia is an example of this principle in literary evolution. Thus self-definition and the search for public acknowledgment go hand in hand with the use of literary segments that are still partly undefined. Theatre by professional companies (instead of members of court), female performances on stage (instead of male acting), but also the translation of biblical psalms in the vernacular or even the transcription of dance techniques in a written text: these are all parts of cultural practice that are still undefined according to classical-oriented frameworks. As such they remain on the edges of regular classification. It is no surprise that all these unexplored fields in theory are often considered forms of irregular practice in society. Thus, Campiglia too follows an irregular path or, in other words, blazes a trail on the margins of the fixed rules. She uses this position to her advantage and thus pastoral drama functions as a literary ‘shortcut’. By starting from this still innocent form of writing, she will succeed in manifesting her alternative voice as a full author in her own right.

In trying to understand the importance of a writer who, like Campiglia, wants to emerge from isolation, the second level of late Cinquecento literary developments is also strictly connected to the literary possibilities offered by an unstable genre (or one not yet stabilized by norm), such as the pastoral drama. I am here referring to the organic tie, which is more and more persistently underlined in the secondary literature nowadays,¹⁴ between the late-Cinquecento

¹⁴ Andrews R., “L’attrice e la cantante fra Cinquecento e Seicento. La presenza femminile in palcoscenico”, *Teatro e musica* 2 (1999), *Écritures vocale et scénique* (Actes du colloque international, Université de Toulouse-Le-Mirail, 17–19/02/1998), Macneil A., *Music and Woman of the Commedia dell’Arte in the Late Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: 2003); Bossier P., *Ambasciatore della risa. La commedia dell’arte nel secondo Cinquecento* (Florence: 2004); McClure G.W., “Woman and the Politics of Play in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Torquato Tasso’s Theory of Games”, *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, 3 (2008) 750–791; Waltheus R. – Corporaal M. (eds.), *Heroines of the Golden Stage. Woman and Drama in Spain and England 1500–1700* (Kassel: 2008).

literary genres' renewal and the role of commedia dell'arte actors (and especially actresses) as agents of a newly shaped practice of professional theatre, starting from the mid-Cinquecento. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that the representation of the *Aminia* at the Estense court in 1573 received an almost mythical status: it was staged by the *Compagnia dei Gelosi*, one of the paramount professional acting companies of that time and the first to be introduced in court festivals. In such a context, it is only logical that Isabella Andreini (1562–1604), as a woman the *Gelosi*'s emblematic figure of the following generation *par excellence* and one of the first European examples ever of a *star* actress, adored by the audience but also detested by some ecclesiastic authorities, went in the direction of the literary production of the pastoral genre as well. If Campiglia provided one of the first examples of pastoral drama in a feminine sphere, her exploratory example was soon followed by Andreini herself, who, in exactly the same year (1588), published *Mirtilla*,¹⁵ her own variation on the genre. The circulation of the pastoral genre among the actors of the commedia dell'arte, the *Comici dell'Arte* gains an even more symbolic value when one realizes that it was one of the extremely rare editorial ventures that came from this group of professional actors. Only on extremely rare occasions of self-promotion did this group choose to break its usual silence concerning the theatrical scripts they edited (which was very rarely the case), a silence which was bound to seal the group's own artistic heritage, of which they were very proud (which is the exact sense of the name in art: *Gelosi*). A hypothesis not yet completely and convincingly verified turns out to become rather interesting for present-day research on the fascinating matter of the 'Cinquecento plurale',¹⁶ which is dealing with the redefinition of patterns in the Renaissance in terms of multiple and even contradictory features in a given period in the Cinquecento. One of the questions that is left unexplained concerns the tie between 'irregular' writers and intellectuals (as Campiglia seems to be) and their predominant role in the process of professionalizing literature.¹⁷

¹⁵ Andreini I., *La Mirtilla*, ed. M.L. Doglio (Lucca: 1995); Vazzoler F., "Le pastorali dei Comici dell'Arte: la Mirtilla di Isabella Andreini" in Chiabò M. – Doglio F. (eds.), *Sviluppi della drammaturgia pastorale nell'Europa del Cinque-Seicento* (Rome: 1992) 281–299; Giachino L., "Isabella Andreini: dall'effimero teatrale alla quête dell'immortalità", *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* (1978) 530–552.

¹⁶ See the website of *Cinquecento plurale*.

¹⁷ An interesting parallel situation is studied by Gatto V., *Benvenuto Cellini, La protesta di un irregolare* (Naples: 2001).

Finally, also Campiglia's position on a third level in the process of change in late-Cinquecento poetics justifies our interpretation of her as a particular, dynamic and creative voice¹⁸ in early modern Italian literature. What I refer to here is the way in which writers increasingly began to manipulate the internal rhetoric of a text with the aim of showing both their expertise on the matter and their ability to elude full observance of rules towards the end of the century. In other words, these authors rejoiced, as did Campiglia, at the elegance with which they announce and denounce their own frameworks, thereby showing their total control of the literary field. The sole purpose of this manipulating technique was to emphasize one's autonomy with respect to rules and, at the same time, to claim the corresponding right to outline one's position as exceptional yet nonetheless authoritative.

Campiglia exerts a remarkable rhetorical effort in this matter, as she manages to impose her own voice explicitly regarding literary choices, where no specific argumentation ultimately allows her such a public stage. Taking advantage of the possibilities offered to her by the free space she creates in the dedicatory letters preceding *Flori*, the author stands out with a mixture of intelligence and caution in all the most subtle lines of the rhetorical net the textual system grants her. Thus she outlines her position even before the first scene of her written drama is revealed. The result of this rhetorical move is at least twofold: on the one hand, Maddalena pictures herself as a professional in literary techniques. On the other hand she does not only stress her difference by using a specific professionalism *in margine*, but also expresses her resistance concerning the unjustified but yet institutionalized skepticism vis-à-vis specific kinds of female writing in late Cinquecento Italy whenever they came too near the borderlines of established authorship.

Thus far I have individuated three essential features of Campiglia's work, all three indicators of post-Tridentine poetic tendencies: the pastoral drama's role as a *locus* of debate over coeval genres, the importance of theatre companies, female writing and the use of alternative literary paths. The intimate connection between these characteristics

¹⁸ Bossier P., "‘Een princelijk en machtig woord’. Aspecten van literaire dynamiek in de Italiaanse renaissance" (Inaugural lecture, University of Groningen, 2006-05-09, online: <http://redes.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/>); Bossier P., "Le verbe princier et puissant. Bref aperçu de la dynamique littéraire à la Renaissance italienne", *Rassegna italiana di letteratura europea* 27–28 (2006) 9–23.

of the author's work is best illustrated by means of a detailed analysis of the dedicatory letters which accompany the first edition of *Flori*, 'favola boschereccia'. Obviously this approach needs to be completed with a full monographic study on the Vicenza author. Yet as for now, we shall concentrate on the specificities of her preamble space, where she clarifies her position and ambition as an accepted author. Without falling into the trap of a too precocious irregular extremism (which would be masculine, in this case), Campiglia manages to deploy her strong-willed ambition in a balanced, elegant and efficient diptych of two dedicatory letters that reflect each other like a mirror.¹⁹

A Mirror-Shaped Diptych: Maddalena Campiglia's Paratexts

Flori is structured as a play in five Acts. An important *Prologue* in verse is presented to the audience by the character of *Love*. At the end of the play, we find an interesting direct address in verse from the author to her own text and main character: *Maddalena Campiglia to her Flori*. The 1588 edition of the text is in octavo format and contains a double dedicatory letter, which expresses not only the link of real friendship between the author and two established personalities of the local aristocracy, but also the interference between text editing and occasional networking in the case of this oeuvre (for instance, Campiglia's subsequent pastoral eclogue was written to celebrate the marriage of the son of one of the addressees). Since the contextual elements of the book are already discussed in the above mentioned modern edition to which I constantly refer, I prefer to concentrate my analyses on a close reading of the two dedicatory letters alone.

The textual apparatus of the two dedicatory letters in *Flori* has nothing casual or episodic. On the contrary, the paratext proceeds in a systematic way and according to a well-structured and recognizable evolutionary line. The first striking phenomenon is the partition of the two letters in a male and in a female part. The first letter is addressed to an influential person belonging to Vicenza's nobility: donna Isabella Pallavicino Lupi Marchioness of Soragna. The second is offered

¹⁹ The following is the first systematic approach of both dedicatory letters in *Flori*. All fragments and their English translations are quotations from the modern edition by Virginia Cox and Lisa Sampson (see note 2).

to a masculine consort of hers, Curzio Gonzaga, an author himself but also part of the illustrious *famiglia Gonzaga*, who reigned at Mantova. In Campiglia's diplomatic intent, it is important to invoke an ally of noble descent, an author not only of amorous verses according to the model of Petrarch, but also of an heroic poem entitled *Fido amante*.²⁰ The particular aspect of the strategies in this preliminary space consists in taking advantage of rather than avoiding the masculine/feminine division, emphasizing in a respectful and reverent way the dominant masculine conventions of contemporary society: e.g. the greeting at the opening of the letter, the summing up of titles and qualities, the invocation of the virtue of each addressee. It is important to see how Campiglia uses a well-balanced rhetorical strategy in both naming the codes and using them in a ironical way in her text. As a result the author manages to frame a relationship between the dominant code in society and the formal rules in literature. The outcome is the defense of her text as an original work of literary creativity and the defense of her attitude as an explicit way of placing herself out of the prefixed social codes.

In a rather provocative way the author is responsible for a considerable (albeit restricted) reversal of the dominant models in culture, at least in the paratext to her own drama text. The first one concerns the status of aesthetic norms, the second one deals with masculine priority. As it is announced in the text, her explicit desire, which is of course coherent with the feminine universe in which she lives and expressed in the letter to the marchesa di Soragna, is to 'seek to depart from the normal habits of women'.²¹ In the 'masculine letter' this desire becomes an almost open disobedience in her writing addressed to a male authority:

for the rest, I confess freely that I have composed the plot of this play more in accordance with my own tastes than with the prescriptions of those who have written theoretically on the genre of pastoral.²²

²⁰ For a modern edition, see Gonzaga C., *Il fidamante*, ed. E.Varini – I. Rocchi (Rome: 2000). For a recent contribution to this still rather unknown key figure in the cultural system of Mantova–Vicenza–Padova–Venice, see Gonzaga C., *Fedele d'Amore*, ed. A. Villata (Rome: 2000).

²¹ 'allontanarmi dall'ordinario costume donnesco'.

²² 'confesso parimente che la favola mia sia piu' secondo l'intenzion mia che le regole di coloro che hanno insegnato l'arte di questi poemi'.

The internal rhetoric of each letter is organized according to a system of textual clusters that are lined up one after the other until it comes to a parallel conclusion. It is almost easy to discover a parallel distribution of content, themes and stylistic choices in both texts. As a consequence, a system appears one could call four internal spaces with meta-textual developments within the paratext. First, there is the obligatory greeting of the addressee, which happens strictly according to the rules. Secondly, an important number of terms remind us of the dominant Petrarchan code by the way metaphors are inserted in the discourse: 'as you are feminine in your beauty and the honesty of your manners'.²³ Here Campiglia seems to quote the generally accepted framing of the female body typical of contemporary love poetry.

In a third layer the discourse integrates the *topos* of literature as a 'costume', a classical image thanks to which, as I will show, a new perspective on the authentic art of practicing literature emerges. It is this part of the text one can read as the most explicit statement of the discourse. So the third space of the paratext is the most radical one. Not surprisingly it deals with the distance vis-à-vis the Aristotelian model and the proposal of a different path to follow. Let us see how this works.

Campiglia unravels her argumentation to Isabella Pallavicina firmly but in full respect of the feminine microcosms both writer and dedicatee share:

Mothers today, when they are sending their daughters out into the world, always dress them in the finest way possible, drawing on all the most recondite and abstruse artifices at their disposal. But this is not my way; on the contrary, I seek to depart from the normal habits of women.²⁴

It is important to notice two features in this fragment. On the one hand there is a fine game with the double meaning of the word 'costume': dress but also habit, social convention, but also artistic modus. On the other hand the author uses some explicit terminology that can refer either to the mother/daughter situation, or to the more gen-

²³ 'quanto donna nel bellissimo sembiante, e negli onestissimi portamenti [...] e la viva candidezza [...] nella più leggiadra maniera'.

²⁴ 'Sogliono tutte le madri d'oggi, dovendo far comparire fuori le loro figlie, comperle nella più leggiadra maniera che si sanno immaginare, ricercando a questo effetto i più riposte e astrusi cantoni dell'arte; il che a me non giova di fare, procurando più tosto d'allontanarmi dall'ordinario costume donnesco'.

eral context of discussion about art: sending into the world/ the finest way/ dress them/ – /disposal/ artifices/.

In the masculine pendant of this refusal of a mere dogmatic application of the Aristotelian model the tone becomes even more radical and severe (as male talk does?):

to compose such a play without following to the letter the precepts of Aristotle and the recommendations of his commentators (...). In view of this, it seems to me that a play written by a mere woman (and a woman, perhaps, ill-fitted for such an enterprise) deserves to be received, if not with generosity, at least with tolerance.²⁵

In the last layer of the paratextual discourse and very much in order to stress her call for tolerance, Campiglia re-uses another famous *topos*: the one by means of which literature is presented as a procreation, and which had been announced by the daughter/costume metaphor in the previous cluster. This *final image* will serve as an *expidit* for both letters in a parallel way:

let your serene eyes not seek in her the gaudy vanities of extrinsic appearance, for she was born in the wild woods and learned from her mother to disdain all such vain, politick trappings. Rather, let the light of your most noble intellect search out the candor and devotion with which she is so richly adorned.²⁶

Once more, the ‘masculine’ letter allows the talented writer to express a very explicit statement:

For I have nothing to give that is dearer to me than this daughter of mine: this true and natural daughter, the apple of my eye: here is my literary product, my daughter, yes, true and natural, neither manufactured nor artificial.²⁷

Of course, this intensive way of using a regular metaphor is not new. Still, it is explored as a strategic weapon to anticipate all kinds of

²⁵ ‘senza la piena osservazione dei precetti d’Aristotele e degli avvertimenti datici dai commentatori della sua poetica, [...] io crederò che questa [her Flori], fatta da donna, e da donna forse poco atta a simile impresa, debba esser letta con lode, almeno con sopportazione’.

²⁶ ‘Miri [E]lla dunque non con l’occhio della serena [S]ua fronte in questa mia figlia estrinseca pompa di vanità volgare (che essendo nata fra’ boschi ha della madre imparato a sdegnar i politici addobbamenti), ma, col lume del [S]uo nobilissimo intelletto, la candida lealtà di che ella viene sì riccamente vestita’.

²⁷ ‘Poiché non [L]e posso dar cosa più cara di questa mia figlia, vera figlia, e naturale, di che principalmente mi godo’.

oppositions based upon the traditional opposition between male and female.

The rhetorical system in the dedicatory letters leaves the impression of a strong sense of self-representation.²⁸ It is her connoisseurship of rhetorics that allows Campiglia to demonstrate her professional skills. She quotes the greatest authors and proves that she knows the suitable names of reference. Besides Aristotle she names Saint Augustine in a very intelligent attempt to anticipate all possible critical attitudes towards her poem:

I know the poem will attract criticism for all kinds of motives [...] I feel myself absolved on this score, however, by none other than St. Augustine, who maintained that all forms of virtuous activity serve to preserve us from vice.²⁹

Moreover, exactly with the purpose of avoiding an excess which could lead to too serious or heavy argumentations at the very moment of her hoped-for entrance in the literary system as a female writer, a subtle irony seems to cover all the rhetorical tools employed by the author making her debut in theatre. In fact, she refers, in a rather friendly way, to the authoritative literary quality of the work of her second addressee. In doing so, Maddalena not only claims to be a reader, but also a literary critic *avant le lettre*. She reveals herself as a literary critic and thus shows how to tackle a difficult matter such as the dedicatee's *Fido Amante*, *poema eroico*, a strikingly hybrid text published in Mantova in 1582, that can be considered as the contemporary *trait d'union* between epic and chivalric literature in Cinquecento Italy. In the same context of creating distance towards her masters and other pivotal persons of her network she especially attacks with some irony 'those who have written theoretically on the genre of pastoral'³⁰ that is, those who follow 'the recommendations of his [= Aristotle's] commentators'.³¹ In short, she prefers the original text rather than its pedantic contemporary interpretations, which threaten to suffocate the

²⁸ See also on this subject Hinds H., "The Paratextual Profusion of Radical Sectarian Woman's Writing of the 1640s", *Prose Studies* 29,2 (2007) 153–177; Sampson L., "The Dramatic Text/Paratext: Barbara Torelli's *Partenia*, favola boschereccia (Ms, c. 1587)", in Bossier P. – Scheffer R. (eds.), *The Functions of Textual Thresholds in the Sixteenth Century and Beyond* (forthcoming).

²⁹ 'So che le opposizioni saranno molte; [...] se da sant'Agostino data non mi fosse licenza con affermar che ogni sorte di virtù allontana l'uomo dai vizi'.

³⁰ 'coloro che hanno insegnato l'arte di questi poemi'.

³¹ 'commentatori della sua [= Aristotle's] poetica'.

authentic, genuine and experienced art. With irony again she indicates (in the ‘masculine’ letter) the literary areas of interest to which female writing is usually confined (i.e. spiritual compositions, love poetry and even translations)

I know the poem will attract criticism for all kinds of motives, but the only one I am prepared to take seriously is this: that it would have been better for me to devote my time to writing religious works, as I have done in the past.³²

With irony again she displays (to the male addressee) her knowledge (or supposed knowledge, difficult to establish?) of Saint Augustine, simply by introducing the next sentence following Augustine’s name with a nice ‘Confesso’ (I confess), a barely hidden hint to the autobiographic work of the Church Father.

In conclusion, the dedicatory letter as a literary form (or maybe even a proper genre) is used here in different manners to anticipate, every irreverent criticism regarding a female writer who defends her literary ‘daughter’. After such a professional exhibition of skills on the threshold of what she considers to be her true debut (and not the aforementioned ‘writing religious works, as I have done in the past’,³³ it is evident that the same calculation will be present in the form and content of the pastoral drama itself, which comes immediately after the paratextual apparatus.

Irregular, Irreverent, Resistant

The important question of how one can define Maddalena Campiglia’s literary affiliation remains. On what side of the late Cinquecento literary system was she acting as an author? Her position in the literary field seems to be twofold. On the one hand, one notices her strong will to gain access to a literary activity that is culturally acknowledged for women.³⁴ On the other hand one can discern a clear need

³² ‘so che le opposizioni saranno molte; ma di questa sola far dovrei stima, che fatto avessi meglio spendere il tempo in scritti spirituali, si come avea cominciato’.

³³ ‘scritti spirituali, si come avea cominciato’.

³⁴ See also Jones A.R., “Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Woman’s Lyric”, in Hutson L. (ed.), *Feminism and Renaissance Studies* (Oxford: 1999) 317–336; Malpezzi Price P. – Ristaino C., “Arcadia felice and the Limits of Renaissance female Authorship”, in *Lucrezia Marinella and the ‘Querelle des Femmes’ in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Madison – Teaneck: 2008) 25–37.

of detachment, of rejection, and even of true opposition to all rules. From this association of contrasting factors in her act of self-fashioning emerges a situation that wavers between self-exclusion and participation. As a consequence Campiglia can be pictured as a skeptical writer, especially when she deals with some of the all too automatically accepted and therefore rather obsolete rules in literature and in society. As an author she appears rather irreverent towards her own contacts in a self-chosen network, which is surprising at first sight, but which allows her to use plain speech. Furthermore, she is very much in favour of the individual freedom to choose one's own horizon of reference. And this is an act of intellectual courage in an age of censorship, Index and institutional control of art in society. Finally, she is faithful to herself when it comes to the expression of her own position towards authorship, which is here interpreted, assessed and defended as a truly experienced situation of the defense of 'a child'. In any case, with her publication of a female pastoral play, as a prudent but also provocative product of her own literary consciousness that is pictured as a manifestation of 'literary maternity', Campiglia proves, like other women before and after her, that she is capable of composing a work of true resistance against literary dogmas.

By means of this literary adventure in a very protectionist literary system Campiglia shows that literature is working also as a cosmos, or a palace with its own entrances and exits, or even as a roadmap with its main streets and interesting byways. Her suggestion to women who do (not) belong to the literary system (yet), – which in itself is to a large extent closed to un-institutionalized voices – is to orient themselves to alternative paths.

Probably a simple self-confirmation without any rhetorical strategy could easily be condemned as a naïve operation of literary self-destruction. Therefore it appears wiser to explore the possibilities offered by literature itself, by focusing on genres that are still lacking stability or the status of general acceptance. An intelligent alternative is to use the rhetoric potential offered by dedicatory letters or other paratexts that can function as a framework for literary advice. Thanks to the example of Campiglia's professional writing, one has to reconsider the existence and utility of byways on the literary map which lead in the quickest way possible to what is constructed as a main objective to meet. Although they may not necessarily be a guarantee of long-term definitive success, byways in literature at least constitute a sign of hope; they offer, at least for any not yet confirmed author, a *quantum of solace*.

Selective Bibliography

- ANDREINI I., *La Mirtilla*, ed. M.L. Doglio (Lucca: 1995).
- ANDREWS R., "L'attrice e la cantante fra Cinquecento e Seicento. La presenza femminile in palcoscenico", *Teatro e musica* 2 (1999), *Écritures vocale et scénique* (Actes du colloque international, Université de Toulouse-Le-Mirail, 17–19/02/1998).
- , "Pastoral Drama", in Brand P. – Pertile L. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature* (Cambridge: 1996) 292–298.
- BOSSIER P., "Italian Actors as Agents Against Commonplaces in the Age of Counter-Reformation", in Cowling D. – Bruun M. (eds.), *The Role of Commonplaces in Western Europe* (Louvain – Paris: 2010) forthcoming.
- , "Le verbe princier et puissant. Bref aperçu de la dynamique littéraire à la Renaissance italienne", *Rassegna italiana di letteratura europea* 27–28 (2006) 9–23.
- , *Ambasciatore della risa. La commedia dell'arte nel secondo Cinquecento* (Florence: 2004).
- CAMPIGLIA M., *Flori, A Pastoral Drama. A Bilingual Edition*, ed. V. Cox – L. Sampson (Chicago: 2004).
- CHEMELLO A., "'Donne a poetar esperte': la rimatrice dimessa Maddalena Campiglia", *Versants* 46 (2003) 98–128.
- COX V., "The Single Self: Feminist Thought and the Marriage Market in Early Modern Venice", *Renaissance Quarterly* 48, 3 (1995) 513–581.
- DE MARCO G., *Maddalena Campiglia: La figura e l'opera* (Vicenza: 1988).
- FINOTTI F., "La scena satiresca e l' 'Aminta' del Tasso", in Finotti F. (ed.), *Retorica della diffrazione. Bembo, Aretino, Giulio Romano e Tasso: letteratura e scena cortigiana* (Florence: 2004) 191–386.
- GALLI STAMPINO M., *Aminta: Staging the Pastoral: Tasso's Aminta and the Emergence of Modern Western Theatre* (Tempe: 2005).
- GIACHINO L., "Isabella Andreini: dall'effimero teatrale alla quête dell'immortalità", *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* (1978) 530–552.
- GONZAGA C., *Il fidamante*, ed. E. Varini – I. Rocchi (Rome: 2000).
- , *Fedele d'Amore*, ed. A. Villata (Rome: 2000).
- GUGLIELMINETTI M., "Un teatro del piacere e dell'onore", in Chiabò M. – Doglio F. (eds.), *Sviluppi della drammaturgia pastorale nell'Europa del Cinque-Seicento* (Rome: 1992) 87–99.
- MACNEIL A., *Music and Woman of the Commedia dell'Arte in the Late Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: 2003).
- MAURI D., *Voyage en Arcadie. Sur les origines italiennes du théâtre pastoral français à l'âge baroque* (Paris: 1996).
- MCCLURE G.W., "Woman and the Politics of Play in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Torquato Tasso's Theory of Games", *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, 3 (2008) 750–791.
- REES K., "Female-authored Drama in Early Modern Padua: Valeria Miani Negri", *Italian Studies* 63, 1 (2008) 41–61.
- RIGGO L., *'Ben mille pastorali'. L'itinerario dell'Ingegneri da Tasso a Guarini e oltre* (Rome: 2004).
- SAMPSON L., "The Dramatic Text/Paratext: Barbara Torelli's Partenia, favola boschereccia (Ms, c. 1587)", in Bossier P. – Scheffer R. (eds.), *The Functions of Textual Thresholds in the Sixteenth Century and Beyond* (forthcoming).
- TASSO T., *Aminta*, ed. C. Varese (Milan: 1985).
- VAZZOLER F., "Le pastorali dei Comici dell'Arte: la Mirtilla di Isabella Andreini" in Chiabò M. – Doglio F. (eds.), *Sviluppi della drammaturgia pastorale nell'Europa del Cinque-Seicento* (Rome: 1992) 281–299.
- WALTHAUS R. – CORPORAAL M. (eds.), *Heroines of the Golden Stage. Woman and Drama in Spain and England 1500–1700* (Kassel: 2008).

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR WOMEN: ALCHEMY, MEDICINE AND THE RENAISSANCE *QUERELLE DES FEMMES*

Meredith K. Ray

Midway through the second half of Moderata Fonte's dialogue on female superiority, *Il merito delle donne*, or *The Worth of Women*, published in 1600, the character Leonora questions why her friends have digressed from their subject and begun debating the medicinal properties of various plants instead – fennel for the eyes, rhubarb for fever, roses for the nerves, cardamom for pregnancy. 'What have the kinds of things we've been talking about got to do with us?' she asks. 'Are we doctors, by any chance? Leave it up to them to talk about syrups and poultices [...] it's absurd for us to be talking about them'.¹ Indeed, to this point, the conversation of the seven women featured in Fonte's polemical work, which she divides into two parts or 'days', has focused not on women's medical knowledge, but rather on exploring the origins of gender inequality in their sixteenth-century society. Gathered together at Leonora's Venetian palazzo, the women question how men have come to dominate the female sex in virtually every capacity, despite their essential inferiority to women. As the character Corinna (who is often described as a dialogic stand-in for Fonte herself), argues '[their] pre-eminence is something they have unjustly arrogated to themselves'.²

Stretching back to Boccaccio's *On Famous Women* (c. 1360) and Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), the *querelle des femmes* tradition to which Fonte's text belongs was a lively and constantly

¹ English translations are taken from Moderata Fonte, *The Worth of Women, Wherein it is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Superiority to Men*, ed. and trans. V. Cox (Chicago: 1997 [180]). The Italian text is edited by Adriana Chemello, *Il Merito delle donne, ove chiaramente si scuopre quanto siano elle degne e più perfetti de gli uomini* (Venice: 1988), cf. 125, 'Che è al caso nostro, di grazia, il discorrer sopra cose tali? Siamo noi medici? Lasciateli parlar loro di siloppi, di empiastri e sí fatte pratiche, che è una vergogna che noi ne trattiamo'. Research for this article was supported by a 2008–2009 fellowship from the Penn Humanities Forum at the University of Pennsylvania.

² Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 59; *Il Merito delle donne* 26, 'questa preminenza si hanno essi arrogata da loro [...]'

evolving cultural conversation that occupied the attention of writers throughout Europe. Seeking to describe and define the qualities and roles of women, humanist writers and, eventually, a much broader array of vernacular authors, argued variously for and against their intellectual, moral, and civic potential. Fonte's dialogue, written as the debate reached its peak in Italy, is a fundamental contribution to this discussion, one that has drawn increased attention in recent years with regard to the arguments concerning women's social inequality to men laid out in the first day³ [Fig. 1]. By contrast, the second part of the dialogue, in which the women seem to diverge from their topic (as Leonora complains) into a lengthy discussion not only of the medicinal and cosmetic preparation of herbs and plants, but also a review of various natural phenomena as well as a critique of alchemical practice, has received far less scrutiny.⁴ Yet the second part of Fonte's dialogue is no less worthy of consideration than the first. Rather, as this essay argues, Fonte uses the literary platform of the second day to 'write back' to existing and emerging traditions of scientific and medical discourse, reappropriating these arenas for women and demonstrating a mastery over them that becomes deeply intertwined with her broader feminist argument about female superiority. Indeed, Fonte's attention here to exploring the 'great secrets' of nature (as they are deliberately described by her character Cornelia⁵) suggests that we situate her discussion of women's superiority not only within the context of the *querelle des femmes*, but also within the Renaissance tradition of *libri di segreti*, or 'books of secrets' – vernacular manuals that sought to describe natural phenomena and offered a wide range of medical and cosmetic recipes for readers' use. Fonte's *The Worth of Women* extends a clear response to such works, a defense of women's ability and right to engage in medical and scientific discourse and practice that expands and enriches the parameters of the debate over women.

³ Fonte's text was published, posthumously, in the same year as Lucrezia Marinella's *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne, co' difetti et mancamenti de gli uomini* (*The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men*), Giuseppe Passi's antifeminist text *I donneschi difetti* (*The Defects of Women*, 1599).

⁴ With some exceptions; see Kolsky S., "Wells of Knowledge: Moderata Fonte's *Il Merito delle donne*", *The Italianist*, 13 (1993) 57–96; see also Cox's introduction to Fonte's dialogue 9–10, and, briefly, Chemello xxxix–xli.

⁵ Cf. Fonte, *Worth of Women* 147; *Il Merito delle donne* 95.



Fig. 1. Artist unknown, Portrait of Moderata Fonte. From *Il merito delle donne* (Venice, Domenico Imberti: 1600). Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania.

Although the seven female characters who populate Fonte's dialogue are fictions, meant to reflect the seven social states of women,⁶ their discussion reflects the real involvement of women in the new science at a variety of levels. Early modern women acted as readers and writers of the kinds of texts upon which Fonte herself drew to compose her protofeminist dialogue – including the *libri di segreti* – and as everyday practitioners of the medical and scientific experiments described within such texts. Evidence of this engagement can be found in examples such as that of Caterina Sforza (1463–1509), who sought out and compiled medical, cosmetic and alchemical recipes over the course of her lifetime, as reflected in the manuscript collection of *Experimenti* (*Experiments*) she left behind.⁷ Such activity by women was not uncommon; indeed, Monica Green notes, the 'collecting of family remedies seems to have turned into a veritable feminine genre of publication' beginning in the sixteenth century.⁸

Nor was Fonte the first writer to trace a connection between the kinds of medical and scientific discourse that were gaining traction in the era of the Scientific Revolution,⁹ and the attention to

⁶ Fonte's seven characters are Adriana, a widow and the eldest member of the group; Leonora, the hostess of the gathering, a young widow who does not wish to remarry; Cornelia, a married woman who looks upon her conjugal state with diffidence; Corinna, an unmarried woman who dedicates herself to study; Helena, a content young bride; Virginia, a naïve young girl, as yet unmarried; and finally, Lucrezia, an older, married woman.

⁷ The original manuscript of Sforza's *Experiments* has been lost, but a contemporary transcription of the collection by Lucantonio Cuppano survives; it was published in the nineteenth century by Sforza's biographer Pier Desiderio Pasolini, who termed it the 'most complete and important known document on medicine and perfume' of the early sixteenth century (Pasolini P.D., *Caterina Sforza*, vol. 3 [Rome: 1893] 601). On Sforza's *Experiments* see also Ray M.K., "Experiments with Alchemy: Caterina Sforza in Early Modern Scientific Culture", in Long K.P. (ed.), *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: 2009, forthcoming). Evidence of women's involvement in many aspects of medicine, science, and alchemy can be found throughout early modern Europe. See for example Tara Nummedal's study of Anna Maria Zieglerin, an alchemist in northern Europe ("Alchemical Reproduction and the Career of Anna Maria Zieglerin", *Ambix* 49 [2001] 56–68); and Lucia Tosi's discussion of a chemistry handbook for women produced in seventeenth-century France by Marie Meurdrac ("Marie Meurdrac: Paracelsian Chemist and Feminist", *Ambix* 48, 2 [2001] 69–82).

⁸ Green M., *Women's Healthcare in the Medieval West* (Aldershot: 2000) 20. Green refers most particularly to herbals and collections of "simples", the ownership – or authorship – of which 'did not upset the professional monopoly of male physicians' (*ibid.* 45).

⁹ Both the term and the periodization of the 'Scientific Revolution' have been increasingly problematized by scholars (for an overview of such shifts in historiogra-

sex and gender that drove the *querelle des femmes*. As a reflection of (or perhaps in reaction to) women's participation in scientific and therapeutic practice, medical and arcane knowledge concerning women would be increasingly deployed in the context of the Renaissance debate over women, in some cases to warn women away from such knowledge, in others to claim ownership of it.

To examine how early modern writers intertwined the discourses of science and gender, this essay will focus on two works that approach the problem of women's involvement in scientific culture in very different ways: Fonte's *The Worth of Women*, and an earlier work composed by Ortensio Lando, the *Lettere di molte valorose donne* (*Letters of Many Valorous Women*, 1548), that raises many of the same issues, if not the same responses. Lando's anthology (which may be described, at least in part, as a book of secrets in the guise of an epistolary collection), portrays women as falling prey to superstition over science, to misguided folk remedies over medicine, and to the vain allure of cosmetic enhancement. In Fonte's *The Worth of Women*, by contrast, the seven female interlocutors become the erudite custodians of an encyclopedic array of knowledge about balneology, botanical pharmacology, and even alchemy, all of which they dispense with full awareness of their responsibilities to themselves and to other women. Fonte's text might be seen to be 'writing back' not only to the books of secrets tradition on which it clearly draws, but also to the satirical views about women, medicine, and science presented in such literary texts as Lando's *Valorous Women*. I do not argue that Fonte responds to Lando in specific, but rather that *The Worth of Women* reacts to many of the associations between gender, science, and medicine put forth in the books of secrets and translated by Lando to the context of the debate over women. Before examining these two works in greater detail, however, it may be useful to offer a brief discussion of the books of secrets genre as it developed in early modern Italy.

phy, see for example Smith P.H., "Science on the Move: Recent Trends in History of Early Modern Science", *Renaissance Quarterly* 62 [2009] 345–375).

Libri di Segreti' and Women Readers

In *The Worth of Women*, Fonte's discussion of various therapeutic remedies and wonders of nature clearly reveals the depths of her learning and her familiarity with authorities such as Aristotle, Pliny, and Discorides. As Virginia Cox has noted, Fonte's consideration of birds and fish in the opening pages of the second day, for example, can be traced to Pliny's *Natural History*; her explanation of earthquakes to Aristotle's *Meteorology*.¹⁰ As I have suggested above, however, we might even more fruitfully approach Fonte's discussion of medicines and natural wonders and its relation to her broader feminist project by examining it within the context of the rich and varied sixteenth-century tradition of books of secrets. As William Eamon has been instrumental in demonstrating, these vernacular collections of medical, cosmetic, and alchemical prescriptions circulated with great success throughout early modern Italy and Europe.¹¹ Offering cures for ailments from rashes and rotting teeth to impotence and infertility, recipes for face creams and perfumes, and methods for preserving food and wine, removing stains from linens, and dyeing fabrics, these works were, as Eamon notes, fundamentally utilitarian in nature – interested, that is, not in the theoretical underpinnings of the 'secret' knowledge they purported to reveal, but rather in its practical application to daily life, and in quantifiable results.¹² Works such as Pietro Bairo's *Segreti medicinali* (*Medicinal Secrets*, 1561), for example, contained prescriptions for treating a range of problems – from rashes and fevers to infertility and tumors – using familiar and readily available herbs and other ingredients; as did the hugely popular *Segreti* of Alessio Piemontese (*Secrets*, 1555).¹³ One of the earliest printed manuals of this sort, Eusta-

¹⁰ Cf. *The Worth of Women*, ed. Cox, 135 n. 33, 145 n. 56, 129 n. 18; Cox notes a number of other examples throughout Fonte's text.

¹¹ Eamon W., *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: 1994); *idem*, "Arcana Disclosed: The Advent of Printing, the Books of Secrets Tradition, and the Development of Experimental Science in the Sixteenth Century", *History of Science* 22 (1984) 111–150; see also Kavey A., *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England 1550–1600* (Urbana, Illinois: 2007).

¹² Eamon, *Science* 4.

¹³ Alessio Piemontese may have been a pseudonym for Girolamo Ruscelli, founder of the *Accademia segreta* in Naples, but Eamon maintains that Ruscelli's involvement with the work may have been as an editor rather than author (*ibid.* 140). On Ruscelli and the *Segreti di Alessio Piemontese*, see Eamon, *Science* 134–151; and Eamon W. –

chio Celebrino's *Opera nova intitolata dificio de ricette* (*New Work Entitled the House of Recipes*, 1525), devoted sections to health and hygiene as well as to perfumes, food preparation, and parlor tricks (such as making a candle burn under water, or creating invisible inks).¹⁴ Such works aimed to entertain and instruct the reader, but made little attempt to explain the scientific processes that underlay the recipes.

Disseminated in vernacular form, books of secrets were directed not just at an élite, highly educated or specialized public (as the Latin medical manuals on which they were often partially based had been), but also at a bourgeois audience that was becoming increasingly literate in Italian.¹⁵ Among this audience was a growing number of women, a presence that caught the attention of authors and publishers alike. Many sixteenth-century books of secrets targeted female readers by focusing on subjects such as feminine beauty, the management of the household, and women's health, all later incorporated by Lando in his critique of female vanity and superstition and by Fonte in her defense of women. Works by Celebrino, Piemontese, Bairo, and many others combined general medical remedies with treatments that focused on the particular needs of women. Celebrino's *Opera nuova [...] per far bella ciaschuna donna* (*New Work [...] For Making Every Woman Beautiful*, 1551), for example, mixed cosmetic recipes with advice on menstruation, pregnancy, and related 'female complaints'. Celebrino's manual addressed female readers directly in an opening sonnet, "Ladies, who wish to make yourselves beautiful" ("Donne che desiate farve belle"), which also emphasized the secret and privileged nature of the recipes it offered.¹⁶ Timoteo Rosello's *Summa de' secreti* (1565) likewise intertwined cosmetic and medicinal 'secrets', and addressed itself to both men and women 'of great intelligence' ('di alto ingegno'). Piemontese's

Pecheau F., "The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli. A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society", *Isis* 75 (1984) 327–342.

¹⁴ On Celebrino see Comelli G., *Ricettario di bellezza di Eustachio Celebrino, medico e incisore del Cinquecento* (Florence: 1960) and Morison S., *Eustachio Celebrino da Udene Calligrapher, Engraver, and Writer for the Venetian Printing Press* (Paris: 1929); see also Eamon, *Science* 127–130.

¹⁵ On this shift, see Carlo Dionisotti's classic essay, "La letteratura italiana nell'età del Concilio di Trento", in *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Turin: 1967). For a critique of Dionisotti and a new approach to the question of women's engagement with literary culture, see Cox V., *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400–1650* (Baltimore: 2008) xx–xxi. On literacy rates in this period see also Grendler P., *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: 1989).

¹⁶ Venice, Bindoni: 1551, s.n.

Secrets offered recipes for rouges and hair dye alongside general remedies for burns, bites, and worms; treatments for problems with lactation or disorders of the uterus next to herbal remedies for toothache and stomachache. Similarly, the *Secreti della signora Isabella Cortese* (*Secrets of Lady Isabella Cortese*, 1561), the only book of secrets to be ascribed to a female author in this period, dispensed advice deemed useful to ‘ogni gran signora’ (‘every great lady’), as stated in the work’s subtitle¹⁷ [Fig. 2]. This included medical and cosmetic remedies, advice for managing the household, and – reflecting the alchemical element that ran through most books of secrets – turning base metal into gold. Evidently of great interest to readers, Cortese’s volume went through some eleven editions by 1677.¹⁸

Of course, issues related to women’s health were of great interest to male medical practitioners (who had by this point largely displaced their female counterparts)¹⁹ as well as to women readers. However, the combination of medical material related to women’s bodies, cosmetic recipes to enhance female beauty, recipes for food preservation and domestic management, and titles and dedications addressed to women, is a strong indication that books of secrets were indeed seeking out female readers. It might also be said that these manuals reached out to women not only in their content, but also in their reliance on the recipe itself as a vehicle for conveying information. Extensively utilized in the books of secrets tradition, not to mention a plethora of Renaissance cookery books, recipes communicated information in a manner that was accessible, manageable, and predictable, making it a useful tool for these practical handbooks. Recipes mimicked the procedures central to scientific experimentation, but were at the same time

¹⁷ Some questions have been raised as to Cortese’s identity. Rudolph M. Bell, for example, suggests that “‘she” might have been a “he”” – in a marketing ploy meant to draw the attention of readers (*How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* [Chicago: 2000] 44–45). Although there is no biographical information with which to establish the female identity of Cortese, however, nor is there evidence to prove that Cortese was the pseudonym of a male author. On Cortese’s work and the problem of the author’s identity, see Lesage C., “La littérature des ‘secrets’ e ‘I secreti d’Isabella Cortese’”, *Chroniques italiennes* 36 (1993) 145–178.

¹⁸ The 1584 edition of the *Secreti della signora Isabella Cortese* is available in a modern facsimile, ed. C. Gagliardo (Milan: 1995); the editor’s introduction incorrectly gives the date of the work’s first edition as 1584 rather than 1561.

¹⁹ On women and the practice of medicine see for example Green K.P., *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origin of Human Dissection* (New York: 2006); Siraisi N.G., *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine. An introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: 1990).

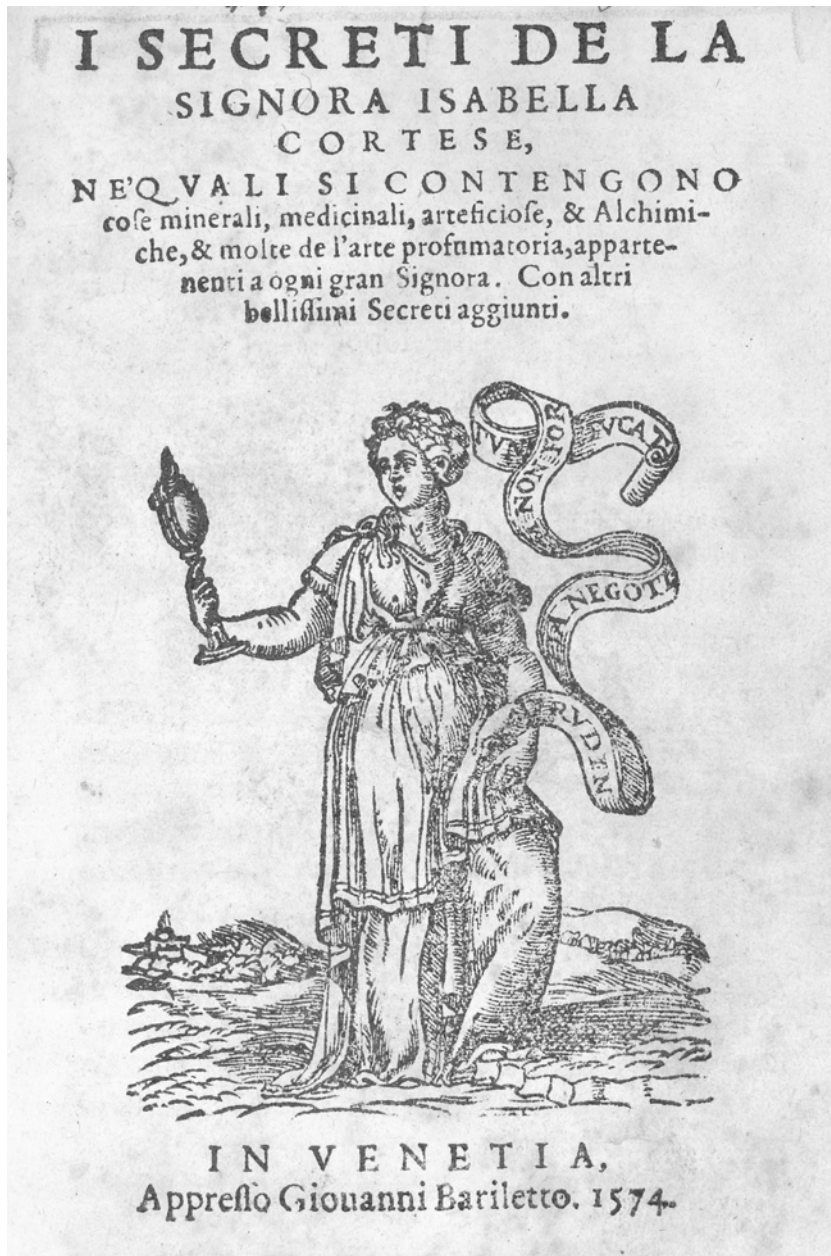


Fig. 2. Title page of *I secreti della signora Isabella Cortese* (Venice, Bariletto: 1574). E.F. Smith Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania.

an established format that was familiar to women, as Allison Kavey points out in her study of books of secrets in early modern England. Accustomed to navigating domestic spaces like the kitchen or garden, women were well acquainted with the recipe's straightforward structure, the order in which it presented information, and the tools for which it called.²⁰ Recipes were a useful format for secrets books precisely because, as Kavey notes, they 'packaged unfamiliar and exotic materials and ideas in a familiar and accessible form'.²¹ These characteristics, however, also made books of secrets an inviting target for parody in some cases. For example, in Lando's *Valorous Women*, women's 'secret' medical and cosmetic recipes form the basis of an argument about female frivolity, as we will see below, rather than demonstrate their capacity to perform scientific experiments. Although Lando's text presents itself as a pro-woman volley in the ongoing debate over women – and does at some points praise women's achievements in certain areas, such as letters – it satirizes the elaborate and sometimes unbelievable medical and cosmetic remedies which women exchange. For Lando, as for others, women's efforts to improve their looks are evidence of their intellectual and moral weakness and need for male guidance;²² the recipe, construed as a feminine structure, is the vehicle for this message. In the books of secrets themselves, however, recipes seem rather to underscore the conviction that one might, through logical and reasoned procedure, manipulate one's world to achieve certain desirable and predictable results²³ – a notion later tested in Fonte's dialogue, in which her speakers will seek, in vain, a recipe capable of 'curing' patriarchal society of its injustice toward women.

²⁰ Cf. Kavey, *Books of Secrets* 98–99.

²¹ *Ibid.* 98. On the function of the recipe see also Eamon, *Science* 131, for whom collections of recipes, which made it possible to compare, contrast, and discern among similar formula, are another manifestation of an increased emphasis on praxis over theory.

²² See for example Leon Battista Alberti's fifteenth-century dialogue *I libri della famiglia* (*On the Family*, Prospect Heights, Illinois: 1969, rpt. 1994, ed., trans. R.N. Watkins), in which the *padre di famiglia* character Giannozzo teaches his impressionable young wife about the dangers of vanity by presenting a decrepit neighbor – aged before her time – as an example of the havoc wreaked on the female face by the use of cosmetics (Bk. III 84–85).

²³ Cf. Kavey, *ibid.*

Between Science and Satire: Ortensio Lando's Anthology of Valorous Women

Published in Venice in 1548, Lando's anthology of *Valorous Women* – like Fonte's later *The Worth of Women* – tapped into a growing interest in texts that focused on women, and engaged with the questions raised in the ongoing *querelle des femmes*. Lando presents the collective experience of some two hundred women through their correspondence, in which they exchange advice and opinions on subjects ranging from the utility of education for women (a fundamental aspect of the *querelle*), to the preparation of beauty creams and cosmetics, to the causes and cures of infertility. Replete with recipes to aid the woman reader in running the household, curing illness, and even achieving eternal youth, Lando's work is clearly tied to the book of secrets tradition, as well as to the associated tradition of practical alchemy. Although the recipes and advice offered in the anthology are attributed to women, the work was authored in its entirety by Lando, as evidenced by numerous internal clues, including a Latin postscript that names him as its compiler.²⁴

By writing in the female voice, Lando endeavored to authorize his epistolary style – early modern letter writing was often construed as a 'feminine genre' – as well as the authenticity of the secret information he presented, constructed here as the provenance of women. In this respect, Lando's anthology proves a suggestive locus for observing the kind of epistemological shift described by Katherine Park in her study of gender and the origins of human dissection, in which she notes an increasing appropriation of 'women's secrets' – that is, information about human physiological systems that women were thought innately to possess – on the part of male medical practitioners and authors.²⁵ Transferring the 'secrets of women' to the context of the *querelle des femmes*, Lando's collection seems to present women's knowledge as private, privileged, and secret, passed along from mother to sister to friend. However, these networks of information are recreated and revealed by a male author who, through

²⁴ On Lando's authorship of the *Valorose donne* see Ray M.K. "Un'officina di lettere: le *Lettere di molte valorose donne* e la fonte della 'dottrina femminile'", *Esperienze letterarie* 3 (2001) 69–91; and *eadem*, *Writing Gender in Women's Letter Collections of the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto: 2009) 45–80.

²⁵ Park, *Secrets of Women*; see also *eadem*, "Dissecting the Female Body: From Women's Secrets to the Secrets of Nature", in Donawerth J. – Seef A., *Crossing Boundaries* (Newark, DE: 2000) 29–47.

the impersonation, demonstrates his own mastery over these arenas of discourse. The female impersonations of the *Valorous Women* thus constitute a complex appropriation of specifically feminine realms of power, from the domestic space of the household to the physical space of the body.

There is a negative connotation, moreover, to feminine secrecy in the *Valorous Women*, where it is presented as being paradoxically in conflict with women's inclination to unfettered or improper speech (a characterization that was associated with parallel ideas linking female silence to chastity). Women may have privileged access to secret knowledge, but they are not always able judiciously to protect those secrets. Reiterating the common stereotype of women as gossips – the revealers of secrets – Lando's women accuse one another not only of spilling secrets, but of gossiping without regard for reputation. In fact, close to half the letters in the anthology are introduced by a reference to what has been said about someone else or what the speakers have heard said about themselves.

Whether or not women can actually keep their own secrets, the attention paid by Lando's epistolarians to the problems they confront – choosing marriage or convent, dealing with abusive husbands, safely navigating pregnancy and childbirth – makes the anthology appear to function, at least superficially, as a kind of domestic handbook, a manual for women akin to the books of secrets discussed above.²⁶ In disseminating this information, many of Lando's letter-writers turn, as in the books of secrets, to the structure of the recipe. In one example, one sister counsels another on maintaining a full-term pregnancy. Packaging her advice in recipe form, she explains how to prepare an antiabortifacient of celery seed, cardamom, mint, and other herbs:

Have your apothecary prepare this powder: celery seed, amomum, mint; equal parts three drams mastic, garofilum, cardomon, blackberry root, plus equal parts three drams zedoary castoreum, equal parts iris and

²⁶ Like many books of secrets, Lando's anthology is formatted to be easily consultable. The names of sender and recipient appear in bold type above each letter, and each missive states its subject in the first few lines. An index was added to the anthology's second edition in 1549, further underscoring its ostensible utility as a reference manual.

sugar, and take this powder with honey; mix up three doses in wine every time, and you are sure to be protected from miscarriage [...].²⁷

Other letters describing how to prepare creams to make the skin look younger or remedies for a husband's bad breath and unpleasant perspiration make similar use of the recipe formula. Virginia Trotta's advice for curing such ailments, for example washing in wine boiled with myrtle or applying a cream made from various herbs and minerals during the month of May, is offered in recipe form, and directly corresponds to recipes commonly found in books of secrets;²⁸ so too does Clara de' Nobili's remedy for infertility, a draught derived from the dried uterus of a hare, carefully prepared with wine.²⁹

If some of this advice is straightforward and practical – no doubt bad breath and body odor were bothersome, infertility distressing (sometimes gravely so) – in other cases, it becomes something rather more complex. It is important to recognize that Lando's appropriation of women's knowledge was not limited to an effort to demonstrate mastery over a female realm of discourse, nor, indeed, to serve women by making these secret recipes readily available. Instead, it is caught up in a broader cultural and religious commentary that is present in all of Lando's works and therefore has many facets. A great critic of humanism and indeed of all the learned professions, Lando valued experience over study. As a result, his appropriation of the 'secrets of women' serves to underscore the importance of praxis over theory, by seemingly characterizing women's knowledge as derived from direct experience and thus superior to that of men, which is indirect and derived from study. Lando makes this point in a letter by 'Madama la Grande' on the possible causes and cures for disorders of the uterus,

²⁷ *Ibid.* fol. 111v–112r: 'Faretevi far dal vostro speciale, la presente polvere: semi d'apio, ameos, menta; parte uguali dracme iij mastiche, garophili, cardomomo, radici di rubea, maggiore parti uguali drac. iij castorio zedoaria, ireos parte uguali dracme il zuccaro dracme y pigliarete questa polvere col mele, et nel vino ne infunderete tre scruoppoli per volta et sarete sicura [...] di non sconciarvi mai [...]'.
²⁸ Virginia suggests that the young man wash with a cloth soaked in wine boiled with myrtle and that he then drink the potion to cure his bad breath; a powder of litharge will stem sweat, while his scabies require a cream of 'lapatio [...] fumoterre [...] fungia di porco e botiro' made during the month of May (thus mixing herbal therapeutics with astrology). For similar problems and remedies see for example Piemontese Alessio, *Secreti* (Pesaro: 1562), Part I, Bk I, 25 (bad breath); Part II, Bk I, 4–7 (*la rognà*); Marinello Giovanni, *Ornamenti delle donne* (Venice, Francesco de' Franceschi: 1562), fol. 8r–15r (*la rognà*); 22–23r (sweat and odor); 281r–v (feet).

²⁹ *Lettere di molte valorose donne* fol. 111r–v; cf. Bairo, *Secreti medicinali* fol. 166v.

considered a major element of female illness in the early modern period and therefore afforded much attention in the pages of medical texts and secrets books.³⁰ Hypothesizing that her friend's problem is linked to a dislocation of the 'matrix' due to an imbalance of bodily humors, Madama la Grande suggests a number of detailed remedies, including uterine fumigation conducted with a mixture of amber, balsam, and musk.³¹ If this doesn't work, she assures her friend, there is any number of women who can offer alternative advice, some of them merely simple peasants, but as knowledgeable as Galen himself: 'country girls who are as learned as any physician found today in Padua or in learned Bologna [...]'.³² This attitude is in keeping with Lando's overall position with regard to established culture (literary, cultural, medical): experience trumps study.³³ His approach is also consonant with the broader scientific climate of the mid-sixteenth century, which privileged empiricism and experiment over theoretical speculation.

Although Lando may have been making a point about the efficacy of practical knowledge over formal learning, however, he did not offer an uncomplicated endorsement of this kind of secret knowledge, no matter how direct it might be. For Lando, a writer of strong reformist views, humanist learning was empty because it was not based on scripture, the sole source of all true and necessary knowledge.³⁴ Not just formal study, but any kind of learning that veered from this focus

³⁰ On the role of the uterus in illness, see Dixon L.S., *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Ithaca – London: 1995).

³¹ *Valorose donne* fol. 110r–v. If the uterus has descended, she should wash in a mixture of amber, balsam, and musk (cf. Bairo, *Secreti medicinali* fol. 179v–180r). If it should wander out of the body, she gives an herbal remedy to mix in wine; that this is offered in Latin is surely a sign that Lando was referencing a medical manual, many of which circulated in Latin as well as Italian. Bairo's *Secreti*, for example, was a partial vernacularization of his Latin handbook *De medendis humanis corporis malis enchiridion* (1512); see Eamon, *Science* 163. Throughout the anthology, Lando mixes real and invented female interlocutors whose names often serve as subtext to his discussion, as here in the case of 'Madama la Grande'.

³² *Valorose donne* fol. 110v: '[...] contadinelle da star al paragone con i più dotti phisici ch'oggi di sieno in Padova, o nella dotta Bologna [...]'].

³³ The issue is again raised where Genevra Malatesta solicits the opinion of a group of Ferrarese physicians regarding her friend's menstrual troubles; Genevra distinguishes between truly learned doctors and those who 'ne sanno meno delle loro mule' ('know less about it than their mules'; *Valorose donne* fol. 118r–v).

³⁴ On Lando's involvement with the heterodox religious culture of early modern Italy, see Ray, "Textual Collaboration and Spiritual Partnership in Sixteenth-Century Italy: The Case of Ottensio Lando and Lucrezia Gonzaga", *Renaissance Quarterly* 62, 3 (2009) 694–747.

was a deviation. Accordingly, even the direct and practical knowledge of women was a target for Lando: although it could be useful when exercised judiciously by virtuous women, it could just as easily devolve into vanity or superstition and magic. Therefore, a distinct undercurrent of parody runs through the anthology and the secret knowledge it presents, calling into question Lando's purported project to defend and promote women. Many of Lando's recipes, for example, are exaggerated and satirized through the inclusion of exotic ingredients and excessively complicated, impractical, or unclear instructions for use. If some offer potentially useful remedies for common physical ailments, many others serve more frivolous purposes, such as artificially enhancing the complexion or permanently reversing the aging process – all recipes offered by the book of secrets tradition, but given a satirical spin by Lando. A letter addressed to Cassandra Lanfreducci, for example, mocks her for the excessive time she spends attending to her skin. So intent is she on keeping her face smooth that she goes through more egg yolks than the entire 'Certosa of Pavia' (a famed monastery in northern Italy) could consume, not to mention barrels of horse's urine and dried hare's blood. Her search for physical beauty leads her to neglect her household, leaving her husband and children to go about in rags.³⁵

The more complex the recipe and the more secret and valuable its content, the more apparent Lando's parodic intent. This is particularly evident in letters containing recipes that are explicitly based upon alchemy – a major element of many Renaissance books of secrets, but a science for which Lando had considerable disdain. If alchemy was embraced by learned figures such as Agrippa and the physician Paracelsus, many others, including Erasmus, reacted with scorn to what they considered nothing more than quackery.³⁶ Lando, who was deeply influenced by Erasmus in many areas, was a skeptic who took direct aim at alchemy in his anthology. Targeting the quest for alchemical gold, for example, he has Giulia Gonzaga – a major figure in the *spirituali* religious circles of sixteenth-century Italy – lambaste alchemists as

³⁵ Lando, *Valorose donne* fol. 48r–v. On using egg yolk to keep the skin smooth, see Cortese, *Secreti* Bk IV 100; Celebrino, *Per far bella* fol. 3v–4r; on hare's blood to remove spots from the face see Marinello, *Ornamenti* 159.

³⁶ Erasmus's colloquy *Alcumistica*, for example, mocks alchemy as pure folly (Erasmus, *Alcumistica* [*Alchemy*], in *CWE* v. 39, 545–556).

frauds and their followers as greedy fools.³⁷ In other letters, the satire is subtler and applied to the therapeutic and practical aspects of alchemy.³⁸ A composition attributed to Isabella Sforza describes an elixir that can simultaneously cure leprosy, remove stains from linens, clear the vision, and bestow eternal youth. Books of secrets offered similar sorts of multi-purpose recipes – Paracelsian remedies derived through progressive distillation – but Lando pokes fun here at the idea of vague remedies that could run to several pages of exotic ingredients, as well as at their alchemical underpinnings.³⁹ Isabella, who serves elsewhere as an example of female virtue and spiritual rectitude, is chided here by her correspondent for wasting her time distilling such potions under the tutelage of a certain ‘mastro Christophoro’⁴⁰ – for example, this one that advises,

Take filings of silver, iron, twigs, lead, steel, gold, foam of silver and gold [...] on the first day soak these things in the urine of a virgin youth, on the second in warm white wine, on the third in fennel juice, on the

³⁷ Lando, *Valorose donne* fol. 54r–v. On alchemical fraud, see Nummedal T., *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: 2007). David Gentilcore examines the widespread phenomenon of medical fraud (which often encompasses alchemy) in *Medical Charlatanism in Early Modern Italy* (Oxford: 2006).

³⁸ As Chiara Crisciani points out, the production of alchemical gold was increasingly subsumed in the early modern period by other therapeutic or spiritual transmutatory goals, for example, the creation of distilled elixirs, the fabled ‘quintessence’ that would prolong life; or, for Marsilio Ficino and the Florentine Neo-Platonists, the transformation of the soul in harmony with the divine universe (“From the Laboratory to the Library: Alchemy According to Guglielmo Fabri”, in Grafton A. – Siraisi N. [eds.], *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe* [Cambridge: 1999] 95).

³⁹ See for example Bairo, *Secreti medicinali* fol. 1r–6r, for a potion that promises to ‘preserve youth, delay old age, and keep the body perpetually healthy and vigorous’ (‘conservar la gioventù, et ritardar la vecchiezza, et mantaner la persona sempre sana et vigorosa’) and Cortese, *Secreti* Bk IV 129 for a similar remedy. Another multi-faceted potion is furnished by Lando’s Argentina Rangona to promote health, get rid of freckles, clear up scabies and leprosy, cure gout and freshen one’s eyes after crying, all subjects commonly treated in manuals (*Valorose donne* fol. 115r–v).

⁴⁰ Cf. *Valorose donne* fol. 116r, where Isabella chides, ‘You often mock me because each day I distill master Christopher’s waters: for my part, I laugh just as much at the naïveté of you and your husband because you don’t see the value that is often found [in such potions]’ (‘Più volte avete riso di me, perché faccia tutto ’l giorno distillare acque da mastro Cristoforo: io ho parimente riso della simplicità vostra e del vostro consorte che non sappiate quanta virtù spesso ci si trovi [...]’). Lando’s satire works on many levels: Isabella accuses her friends of the same naïveté Lando sees in her. It seems significant, moreover, that Isabella’s teacher is a man, which introduces yet another layer to the gender dynamic at play here.

fourth in egg white, on the fifth in the milk of a woman who is nursing a son [...].⁴¹

Central to Isabella's recipe is the alchemical process of multiplication, by which a substance was thought to acquire different and increasingly powerful properties over a period of days, capable at each stage of curing various complaints.⁴² Isabella's recipe, moreover, relies on alchemical ingredients such as the foam of silver and gold.⁴³ Gold foam, as we learn elsewhere in the anthology, can be made by distilling a mixture of wine, sulphur, salt, white tartar and other ingredients over a series of days: a mere drop of the substance produced on the tenth day, when placed in a gilded goblet, will create a *schiuma d'oro* that will turn anything it touches to gold.⁴⁴ This final transmutation was, of course, one of the ultimate goals of alchemy. Rather than devoting herself to the study of scripture, then, Isabella has been seduced by alchemy's false promise of eternal youth and endless wealth.

In presenting Isabella Sforza as a practitioner of what we may call domestic alchemy – alchemical practice applied to the demands of everyday life – Lando was drawing on well-established gendered foundations of alchemical discourse, which placed 'women's work' (for example, washing and cooking) at the center of many alchemical procedures⁴⁵ [Fig. 3]. He did so, however, not to privilege women as

⁴¹ *Valorose donne* fol. 116r–v: 'Pigliate limatura d'argento, ferro, ramo, piombo, acciaio, oro, schiuma d'argento e schiuma d'oro [...] Porrete dette cose per il primo giorno nell'urina di un fanciullo vergine, il secondo giorno in vino bianco caldo, il terzo nel succhio di fenocchio, il quarto giorno nel bianco dell'uova, il quinto giorno nel latte di femina che allatti un fanciullo [...]'.

⁴² Cf. Coudert A., *Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone* (Boulder: 1980) 43, 47–52; and, on distillation more generally, Moran B., *Distilling Knowledge: Alchemy, Chemistry, and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: 2005).

⁴³ *Valorose donne* fol. 54r–v.

⁴⁴ *Valorose donne* fol. 115v.

⁴⁵ Notions about sex, gender, and women's social roles underlay the imagery and conceptualization of the alchemical process, conceived of as a reproductive operation in which the alchemical vessel (or womb) gave birth to the philosopher's stone; while the 'great work' of alchemy (that is, transmutation) was often depicted as sharing commonalities with women's roles in the kitchen and at the hearth: measuring, cooking, stirring, tending. See for example the emblems depicted in Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens* (*Michael Maier's Atalanta fugiens: Sources of an Alchemical Book of Emblems*, ed. H.M.E. de Jong (Leiden: 1969); see also Bayer P., "From Kitchen Hearth to Learned Paracelsianism: Women and Alchemy in the Renaissance", in Linden S. (ed.), *Mystical Metal of Gold* (Brooklyn: 2007) 365–386; Perry Long K., *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot: 2006); McKee F., "The Paracelsian Kitchen", in Grell P. (ed.), *Paracelsus: The Man and His Reputation* (Leiden: 1998) and Warlick M.E., "The Domestic

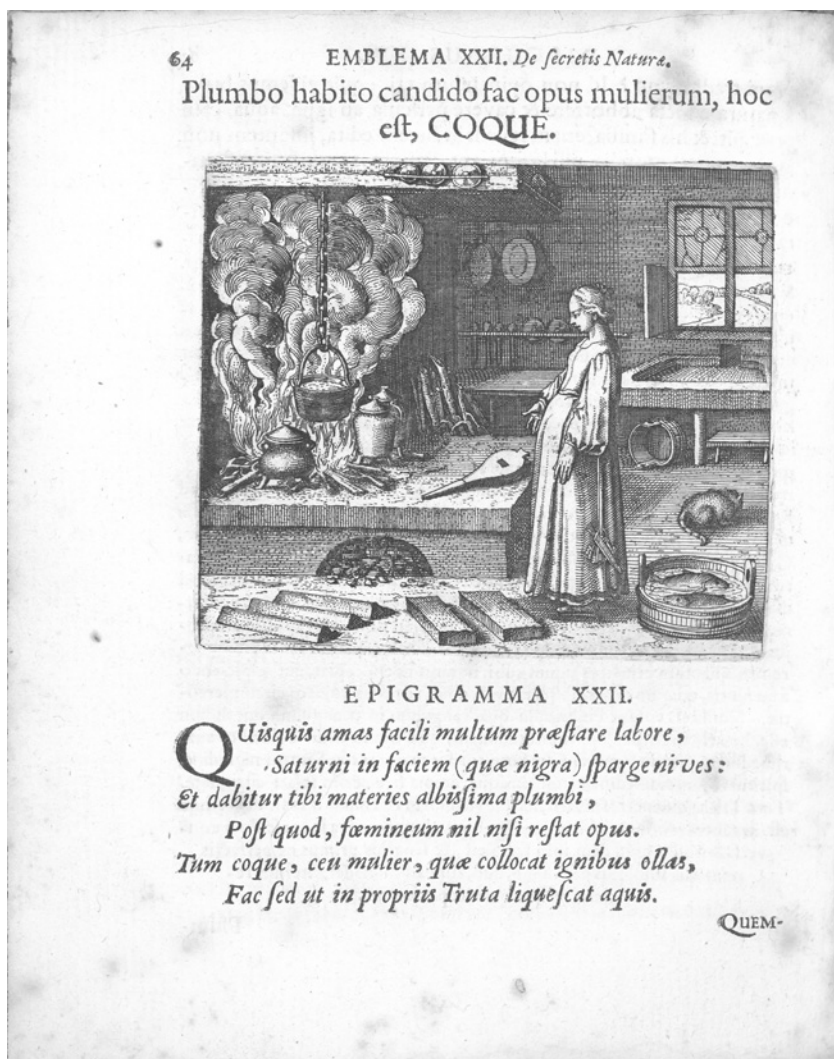


Fig. 3. Johann Theodor de Bry, Emblem XXII. From Michael Maier, *Atalanta fugiens* (Oppenheim, De Bry: 1618). E.F. Smith Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania.

possessors of this secret knowledge, but rather to underscore the absurdity and fraudulence of alchemical practice. In these compositions, as Novella Bellucci points out, Lando targets the vanity and credulity of women as responsible, at least in part, for a broader cultural devolution into popular superstition and magic, and a distraction from what should be the true focus of virtuous people, that is to say, scripture.⁴⁶

Lando's presentation of feminine knowledge, therefore, functions on many levels. On the one hand, the *Letters of Many Valorous Women* clearly sought to capitalize on a growing market for literary texts, including letters, books of secrets, and many other genres, that addressed and explained women's experience. At the same time, however, his critique of women's 'secret knowledge' as ingenuous, credulous, impractical, and often frivolous, serves not just to discredit these forms of knowledge in women, but to advance the broader cultural and religious critique that is characteristic of Lando's heterodox views in general. Rather than valorize or authorize women as the possessors of a valuable and arcane body of knowledge, Lando manipulates the medical and scientific discourse of the secret in the service of his own cultural and religious agenda: that is, his disdain for all forms of ritual and superstition, and his conviction that only private and unmediated study of the true book – the Gospel – could lead to the tranquility of the soul.

Remedies for Inequality: Moderata Fonte's "The Worth of Women"

If Lando uses medical, cosmetic and alchemical secrets to make a point about women's susceptibility to moral and spiritual error, in *The Worth of Women* the same forms of knowledge are recast as a central part of Fonte's pro-woman project. In the second part of Fonte's dialogue, her interlocutors address many of the areas of knowledge present in the

Alchemist: Women as Housewives in Alchemical Emblems", in Adams A. – Linden S. (eds.), *Emblems and Alchemy* (Glasgow: 1998) 25–47.

⁴⁶ "Lettere di molte valorose donne [...] e di alcune petegolette, ovvero: di un libro di lettere di Ortensio Lando", in Quondam A. (ed.), *Le carte messaggere* (Rome: 1981) 271. On the centrality of scripture in Lando's writing, see Grendler P., *Critics of the Italian World 1530–1560: Anton Francesco Doni, Niccolò Franco & Ortensio Lando* (Madison: 1969) 120.

vernacular books of secrets, from balneology to herbal pharmacology to the healing properties of stones and gems, to name just a few. Yet in Fonte's hands, this information is given new form and focus, harnessed now in the service of her social commentary. If overtly practical handbooks such as those of Rosello, Bairo, Piemontese, and Cortese offered little in the way of explication, instead providing long lists of recipes, sometimes navigable by index, in Fonte's case, the 'secrets of nature' are woven into the narrative framework established in the first day of the dialogue, and constitute a key element of her feminist project. Remedies and recipes serve both to educate the reader and demonstrate the medical expertise of Fonte's speakers, and also, repeatedly, to underscore the shortcomings of men, as when the character Corinna concludes that all the medicinal prescriptions in the world 'wouldn't be enough to protect us from men's malice'.⁴⁷ Each area of knowledge touched on by Fonte's speakers comes to signify something larger, functioning on at least three levels: first as medically or scientifically useful and functional information made available to the reader; second as evidence of women's intellect and capacity for scientific reasoning; and finally, to further emphasize the moral failings of men.

Following a discussion of natural phenomena such as earthquakes and the cycles of the moon, Fonte's characters enter into a conversation about the curative waters of spas, popular destinations in the early modern period for those seeking relief from a variety of ailments.⁴⁸ The women's discussion of balneology not only demonstrates their command of the relative properties of different types of spas and their broader knowledge about the movements of springs and rivers, but furthermore is explicitly tied to their pro-woman argument. While many books of secrets praised the healing virtues of waters and in particular their capacity to treat women's physical complaints (such as infertility) and enhance female beauty, Fonte's discussion of spas is a seamless extension of her broader narrative and polemical purpose.

⁴⁷ Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 161; *Il Merito delle donne* 107: '[...] non vi gioverebbe quanta tiriaca fanno gli speciali [...] per riparaci a tanta malignità'.

⁴⁸ See for example Chambers D.S., "Spas in the Italian Renaissance", in Di Cesare M. (ed.), *Reconsidering the Renaissance* (Binghamton, NY: 1992) 3–27 and Park, "Natural Particulars", in *Natural Particulars* 349–367. As Cox notes, Fonte draws here on ancient sources such as Pliny's *Natural History* (*The Worth of Women*, ed. Cox 150, nn 69, 70).

Despite the spas' healthful properties, Leonora notes, they cannot cure those most 'pernicious' of male defects – namely, deception, ingratitude, and infidelity – indispositions which, as Corinna adds, could not be cured by all the waters of the ocean.⁴⁹ Marveling that water, despite being a heavy element, manages to rise high enough to feed mountain springs, Leonora further comments that in this respect it is similar to men, who although inferior and 'heavy' in nature, yet find the means to rise and rule – an example of Nature breaking her own laws:

Just think of the way in which men, who are inferior to us and so should by rights stay below us, in a lowly and humble position, manage to rise above us and dominate us, against all reason and against all justice. So you shouldn't be surprised if water, too, though such a base element, is presumptuous enough to ascend to the level of mountains. At least water flows back to its natural level again, whereas men remain obstinately fixed in their stern position of eminence.⁵⁰

In this manner, the discussion of the medicinal properties of the spa serves simultaneously to impart information to the reader, to demonstrate the women's grasp of the subject, and to fortify their argument about male inferiority.

In similar fashion, Fonte – drawing on medical authorities such as Discorides as well as their re-presentation in vernacular works such as Pierandrea Mattioli's *Commentary on the Six Books of Discorides* (1544) and Castor Durante's *New Herbal* (1585) – elaborates on the significance of balsam, the miraculous resin panacea that was a familiar item in early modern books of secrets.⁵¹ For Fonte, balsam is not only a precious medicinal tool, but also an illuminating example of male intractability. Once again using medicine to underscore her point about men's deeply-rooted prejudices, Corinna explains that balsam is the 'ideal remedy for everything', except the disease the women are talking about (namely, men).⁵² Likewise, even the most precious of therapeutic

⁴⁹ Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 151 (cf. *Il Merito delle donne* 98).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 157; *Il Merito delle donne* 103: '[...] fate conto di veder gli uomini, che essendo inferiori a noi e perciò dovendo essi star bassi ed umili, vedete come s'inalzano, come ci soprastano contra ogni ragione, contra ogni giustizia, però non vi maravigliate se l'acqua, elemento basso, anch'ella presume d'ascendere all'altezza dei monti, ma pur ella torna ad abbassarsi di nuovo, dove gli uomini stanno sempre fermi nel lor rigore ed ostinazione'.

⁵¹ Cf. *The Worth of Women*, ed. Cox 169, n. 101.

⁵² Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 169; *Il Merito delle donne* 114, 'Il balsamo [...] si dice pur che guarisse di tutte le infirmità'.

stones, such as coral, sapphire, pearl – capable of staunching blood, restoring vision, and nourishing the sick, respectively – prove unable to effect a change in men's behavior.⁵³ In the same vein, foodstuffs such as colocynth, or bitter apple, are prized for their efficacy in treating toothache or ailments of the spleen. Yet colocynth is poisonous on its own, as Leonora warns – just as men are poisonous without women to serve as an antidote. Like the other women, Leonora does not miss the opportunity to tie together her own knowledge about medicine with her efforts to demonstrate female superiority – despite her insistence early on that matters of 'syrops and poultices' are best left to male doctors.

Fonte, moreover, rehabilitates the recipe, sometimes trivialized or parodied, to different purpose in the dialogue's second day, employing it, too, as a means to underscore her arguments about men. Noting that certain foods can be used in both medicines and cosmetics, for example, Fonte's Cornelia describes the virtues of cows and oxen. In addition to the healthful milk provided by the cow, Cornelia explains that calf's foot, when boiled down over a period of forty days, creates a gelatin that eliminates wrinkles and restores the user's skin to that of a 'girl of fifteen'. While Lando criticizes such cosmetic preparations for causing the user to neglect her family and her duties in her search for beauty, Fonte uses this recipe to make a pro-woman point. Cornelia's recipe, indeed, spurs Corinna to comment that indeed it is far easier to understand the curious and varied properties of beasts, such as oxen, than to make sense of the falsity of men:

Women aren't as aware of men's failings as they should be [...] In fact, it's easier for us to understand the properties of irrational animals (even though they should be more mysterious to us, since their nature is alien from ours and they can't speak) than to understand these false creatures who are close to us in nature, but quite different in their character and desires, and who never speak the truth.⁵⁴

⁵³ Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 185; *Il Merito delle donne* 128.

⁵⁴ Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 161; *Il Merito delle donne* 107: '[...] non son tanto noti come bisognaria che ci sapressimo più schermire, che non sappiamo; e possiamo meglio intendere la proprietà de gli animali irragionevoli, ancor che ci dovria esser più occolta per esser tanto diversa dalla nostra ed anco perché non sanno essi parlare, che quella di questi falsi a noi simili di natura, ma diversi di qualità e volontà, che mai ci dicono il vero'.

The secrets of nature, from the hidden medicinal properties of herbs and stones to the cosmetic potential of foods, are ultimately more knowable and more reasonable than unraveling the process by which men, who are inferior to women, have managed to establish dominion over them – the central question of Fonte's dialogue.

Interestingly, aside from a handful of references to remedies for the discomforts of pregnancy (nutmeg for the stomach, eagle stone against miscarriage), most of the medicinal therapies offered by Fonte's interlocutors are general in nature – efficient single-ingredient 'simples' capable of serving many purposes at once. Aloe, for example, treats cholera, phlegm, melancholy, nerves, dropsy, constipation, and blurred vision – all problems that affect both sexes. Fonte displays her characters' medical expertise not as availing only women, but rather as evidence of the rational and intellectual capacities of women that make them superior to men and worthy to counsel both sexes equally wisely in this arena as in others. Women's knowledge of the body, here, transcends their own bodies. In this respect, I would suggest, Fonte not only responds to the association of women with the 'secrets of nature',⁵⁵ but also seeks to re-establish the seriousness and utility of women's medical knowledge in the face of efforts to satirize or diminish it. Furthermore, Fonte's women are quite aware that they are delving into an arena of medicine for which there are no models among the male medical authorities. Leonora, for example, complains that although there are remedies aplenty against 'bad blood and cholera', there is no such recipe to cure the dangerous naiveté of women, who, blinded by natural compassion, continue to care for their 'sick [i.e., male] companions'. She is answered by Corinna, who quips, 'There's a remedy you won't find in Galen. And none of the other authorities on the subject seems to have discovered it either – or if they did, they certainly didn't record it'. As Corinna explains, it would hardly be in men's interest to teach women to destabilize the normal social structure in which women care for men – as daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers; and men abuse women in all their corresponding roles: 'After all, it would hardly have been in their interests, for wolf doesn't eat wolf, and men know very well which side of their bread is

⁵⁵ See for example, Green M.H., "From 'Diseases of Women' to 'Secrets of Women': The Treatment of Gynecological Literature in the Later Middle Ages", *Journal of Medical and Early Modern Studies* 30, 1 (2000) 5–39; Park, *Secrets of Women*.

battered: if we stopped loving them, they'd be in a fine state!⁵⁶ Not only does Fonte demonstrate in the second day that she has learned and absorbed the lessons of the great authorities on medicine and science – along with their vernacular permutations in the books of secrets – but she also recognizes the need for a new, feminist practice of medicine for which no models exist. To take control of their future, women themselves will need to invent new forms of ‘medicine’.

If Fonte's treatment of medicine serves to underscore and elaborate her argument about the superiority of women, finally, the same can be said of her approach to alchemy. As we have noted, alchemy was a subject of great interest and constituted a major element of many books of secrets; it entered into the territory of the *querelle des femmes* through its critique in works such as that of Lando. In contrast to Lando, however, who uses alchemy as an example of women's susceptibility to folly, Fonte divorces alchemical practice – and the pursuit of alchemical gold in particular – from the world of women. While acknowledging that certain materials central to the alchemical process have important and useful medicinal functions – for example, mercury, which has ‘the power to dissolve substances’, or litharge (froth from gold and silver) which ‘is good for cleaning, closing, and healing wounds’ – Fonte draws a distinction between the therapeutic use of alchemy and the pursuit of riches.⁵⁷ Alchemical fraud is associated in her dialogue with men, not women, and described as a further manifestation of their moral defects. Alchemy, Corinna states, is merely an obsession, one that reduces men to nothing. There is no better alchemy, she concludes, than for ‘a man to study hard and develop skills and then to work hard to make money through the sweat of his brow. That, for me, is an alchemy that never fails’.⁵⁸ For Fonte, the discussion of alchemy, like that of medicine, furnishes an opportunity for the women to demonstrate their knowledge, good judgment, and moral and intellectual superiority.

⁵⁶ Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 171; *Il Merito delle donne* 116: ‘Non la scrive Galeno questa medicina, né altro autore l’ha mai trovata [...] o se l’ha trovata non la lasciò scritta [...] perché lupo non mangia di lupo, troppo conoscono il lor danno gli uomini, se noi non gli amassimo guai a loro’.

⁵⁷ Cf. Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 186–187; *Il Merito delle donne* 130.

⁵⁸ Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 187; *Il Merito delle donne* 130: ‘[...] non so io che più bella alchimia per far oro ed argento si possa trovar quanto che l’uomo studi e s’affatichi per imparar virtù e che con le sue giuste fatiche sia solcito ad acquistarsi le facoltà e le ricchezze che questa è una alchimia che non falla mai’.

Prescriptions for Women

In Fonte's *The Worth of Women*, penned at the height of the Renaissance debate over women, the kinds of medical and scientific knowledge that had begun to circulate widely in works such as the vernacular books of secrets become a weapon to be wielded in defense of women. This knowledge does not serve a merely rhetorical purpose. Rather, it plays a fundamental role in women's quest to reclaim their rights and their position in society. If works such as Lando's *Letters of Many Valorous Women* linked women's medical and scientific knowledge to their frivolous and even dangerous pursuit of beauty and youth, for Fonte, this kind of information – and medical knowledge in particular – becomes a crucial element in women's efforts to achieve independence from men, who by the sixteenth century, had come to dominate professionalized medical practice. If, in the quote with which this essay began, Leonora dismisses medicine as an area best reserved for male doctors, her rebuttal comes from Lucretia, who insists she is wrong. 'On the contrary, it's good for us to learn about these things without needing help from men', Lucretia argues. 'In fact, it would be a good thing if there were women who knew about medicine as well as men, so men couldn't boast about their superiority in this field and we didn't have to be dependent on them'.⁵⁹ Women may not be able to change men's hearts. Indeed, Corinna admits at last that, 'We've talked about all the stars, the air, birds, rivers, fish, and all kinds of animals, plants, and herbs. And we still haven't found anything with the power to work a change in men's minds'.⁶⁰ But through their own education, socio-political awareness, and the medical knowledge that allows them to care for and counsel themselves and others, women can begin to reverse the gender injustices of their society. This, ultimately, is the best prescription for women.

⁵⁹ Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 180–181; *Il Merito delle donne* 125: 'Anzi [...] è bene che noi ne impariamo per tenir da noi, acciò che non abbiamo bisogno dell'aiuto loro; e saria ben fatto che vi fussero anco delle donne addottrinate in questa materia, acciò essi non avessero questa gloria di valer in ciò piu di noi e che convenimo andar per le man loro'.

⁶⁰ Fonte, *The Worth of Women* 184–185; *Il Merito delle donne* 128: '[...] con tutto ciò che si è ragionato di stelle, di aria, di uccelli, di acque, di pesci e di tante qualità di animali, di erbe e di piante, non si ha già ritrovato cosa ancora di tal virtù, che potesse far mutar animo a questi uomini [...]']'.

Selective Bibliography

- ALBERTI L.B., *On the Family*, ed., trans. R.N. Watkins (1969) (Prospect Heights, IL: 1994).
- BAIRO PIETRO, *I Secreti medicinali* (Venice, Sansovino: 1561).
- BAYER P., "From Kitchen Hearth to Learned Paracelsianism: Women and Alchemy in the Renaissance", in Linden S. (ed.), *Mystical Metal of Gold* (Brooklyn: 2007) 365–386.
- BELL R., *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago: 2000).
- BELLUCCI N., "Lettere di molte valorose donne [...] e di alcune petegolette, ovvero: di un libro di lettere di Ortensio Lando", in *Le carte messaggere*, ed. A. Quondam (Rome: 1981) 255–276.
- CELEBRINO EUSTACHIO, *Opera nova per far bella ciaschuna donna* (Venice, Bindoni: 1551).
- , *Opera nova intitolata dificio delle ricette* (Venice, Bindoni: 1525).
- CHAMBERS D.S., "Spas in the Italian Renaissance", in Di Cesare M. (ed.), *Reconsidering the Renaissance* (Binghamton: 1992) 3–27.
- COMELLI G., *Ricettario di bellezza di Eustachio Celebrino, medico e incisore del Cinquecento* (Florence: 1960).
- CORTESE I., *I Secreti della signora Isabella Cortese*, ed. C. Gagliardo (Milan: 1995).
- COUDERT A., *Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone* (Boulder: 1980).
- COX V., *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400–1650* (Baltimore: 2008).
- CRISCIANI C., "From the Laboratory to the Library: Alchemy According to Guglielmo Fabri", in Grafton A. – Siraisi N. (eds.), *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: 1999) 295–319.
- DIONISOTTI C., *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Turin: 1967).
- DIXON L.S., *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Ithaca: 1995).
- EAMON W., "Alchemy in Popular Culture: Leonardo Fioravanti and the Search for the Philosopher's Stone", in *Early Science and Medicine* 5 (2000) 196–214.
- , *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: 1994).
- , "Arcana Disclosed: The Advent of Printing, the Books of Secrets Tradition, and the Development of Experimental Science in the Sixteenth Century", *History of Science* 22 (1984) 111–150.
- — PEHEAU F., "The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli. A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society", *Isis* 75 (1984) 327–342.
- FORTE M., *The Worth of Women, Wherein It Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Superiority to Men*, ed., trans. V. Cox (Chicago: 1997).
- , *Il Merito delle donne*, ed. A. Chemello (Venice: 1988).
- GENTILCORE D., *Medical Charlatanism in Early Modern Italy* (Oxford: 2006).
- GREEN M.H., *Women's Healthcare In the Medieval West* (Aldershot: 2000).
- , "From 'Diseases of Women' to 'Secrets of Women': The Treatment of Gynecological Literature in the Later Middle Ages", *Journal of Medical and Early Modern Studies* 30, 1 (2000) 5–39.
- GRENDELER P., *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: 1989).
- , *Critics of the Italian World 1530–1560: Anton Francesco Doni, Niccolò Franco & Ortensio Lando* (Madison: 1969).
- JONG M.E. DE (ed.), *Michael Maier's Atalanta fugiens: Sources of an Alchemical Book of Emblems* (Leiden: 1969).
- KAVEY A., *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England 1550–1600* (Urbana: 2007).
- KOLSKY S., "Wells of Knowledge: Moderata Fonte's *Il Merito delle donne*", *The Italianist* 13 (1997) 57–96.

- LANDO ORTENSIO, *Lettere di molte valorose donne* (Venice, Giolito: 1548).
- LESAGE C., "La littérature des 'secrets' e 'I secreti d'Isabella Cortese'", *Chroniques italiennes* 36 (1993) 145–178.
- LONG K.P., *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot: 2006).
- LONG P.H., "Science on the Move: Recent Trends in History of Early Modern Science", *Renaissance Quarterly* 62 (2009) 345–75.
- McKEE F., "The Paracelsian Kitchen", in Grell P. (ed.), *Paracelsus: The Man and His Reputation* (Leiden: 1998) 293–308.
- MARINELLO GIROLAMO, *Ornamenti delle donne* (Venice, Francesco de' Franceschi: 1562).
- MORAN B., *Distilling Knowledge: Alchemy, Chemistry, and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: 2005).
- MORISON S., *Eustachio Celebrino da Udene Calligrapher, Engraver, and Writer for the Venetian Printing Press* (Paris: 1929).
- NUMMENDAL T., *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: 2007).
- , "Alchemical Reproduction and the Career of Anna Maria Zieglerin", *Ambix* 49 (2001) 56–68.
- PARK K., *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origin of Human Dissection* (New York: 2006).
- , "Dissecting the Female Body: From Women's Secrets to the Secrets of Nature", in Donawerth J. – Seef A. (eds.), *Crossing Boundaries* (Newark: 2000) 29–47.
- , "Natural Particulars: Medical Epistemology, Practice, and the Literature of the Healing Springs", in Grafton A. – Siraisi N., (eds.), *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: 1999) 347–367.
- PASOLINI P.D., *Caterina Sforza* (Rome: 1893).
- PIEMONTESE ALESSIO, *I Secreti* (Venice, Sigismondo Bordogna: 1555).
- RAY M.K., "Textual Collaboration and Spiritual Partnership in Sixteenth-Century Italy: The Case of Ortensio Lando and Lucrezia Gonzaga", *Renaissance Quarterly* 62, 3 (2009) 694–747.
- , "Experiments with Alchemy: Caterina Sforza in Early Modern Scientific Culture", in Long K.P. (ed.), *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: 2009) forthcoming.
- , *Writing Gender in Women's Letter Collections of the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto: 2009).
- , "Un'officina di lettere: le *Lettere di molte valorose donne* e la fonte della 'dottrina femminile'", *Esperienze letterarie* 3 (2001) 69–91.
- ROBERTS G., *The Mirror of Alchemy: Alchemical Ideas and Images in Manuscripts and Books From Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (London: 1994).
- Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. W.R. Newman – A. Grafton (Cambridge, Mass: 2001).
- SIRAISSI N.G., *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine. An introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: 1990).
- TOSI L., "Marie Meurdrac: Paracelsian Chemist and Feminist", *Ambix* 48, 2 (2001) 69–82.
- WARLICK M.E., "The Domestic Alchemist: Women as Housewives in Alchemical Emblems", in Adams A. – Linden S. (eds.), *Emblems and Alchemy* (Glasgow: 1998) 25–48.

THE APPROPRIATION OF THE GENRE OF NUPTIAL POETRY BY KATHARINA LESCAILJE (1649–1711)

Nina Geerdink

Love is a conqueror and a violator. When a bride is captured by Love, pity arises instead of jealousy or admiration. These are not themes one expects to encounter in a poem written to commemorate the cheerful occasion of marriage. Yet in some of the nuptial poems by the Dutch poet Katharina Lescaijle (1649–1711) these are dominant themes. Marriage in her poems is often represented as a prison, which brings an end to one's freedom.

Recent research has regarded this as remarkable. On the basis of a semiotic reading of poems Lescaijle wrote for female friends, Lia van Gemert concluded that we should consider the possibility that Lescaijle harboured lesbian feelings for them.¹ Van Gemert bases her argument partly on a nuptial poem. The negative tone Lescaijle's poem takes to marriage could according to her reveal feelings of love for the bride and jealousy towards the bridegroom.² Ellen Grabowsky has offered resistance to this interpretation on the basis of archival research revealing biographical evidence that problematises Van Gemert's interpretations.³ Grabowsky also points to similarities between this poem and some other nuptial poems by Lescaijle. She contends that the negativity towards marriage in the poems for some women bears

¹ Gemert L. van, "Hiding Behind Words? Lesbianism in 17th-century Dutch Poetry", *Thamyris: Mythmaking from Past to Present* 2, 1 (1995) 11–44; and "De vrouwen-zucht van Katharina Lescaijle", in Gelderblom A.J. – Duits H. – Smits-Veldt M.B. (eds.), *Klinkend boeket: studies over renaissance-sonnetten voor Marijke Spies* (Hilversum: 1994) 143–149. The first remarks on the possibility of Lescaijle's lesbian erotic feelings are made in Spies M., "Oudejaarsavond 1675: Cornelia van der Veer schaduwet Katharina Lescaijle als deze van het huis van haar vriendin Sara de Canjoncle naar dat van haar zuster gaat. Het vrouwelijk aandeel", in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen M.A. (ed.), *Nederlandse literatuur, een geschiedenis* (Groningen: 1993) 282–285.

² The poem, written on the occasion of the marriage of Sara de Canjoncle (I) and Nicolaas Buitendoor, is published in Lescaijle Katharina, *Tooneel- en mengelpoëzy*, 3 vols (Amsterdam, Erfgen. Lescaijle en Dirk Rank: 1731) II 16–18 (hereafter referred to as *TMP*). Gemert, "Hiding Behind Words?" translates parts of it.

³ Grabowsky E., "Katharina Lescaijle (1649–1711) en de 'vrouwenzucht': schijn of werkelijkheid?", *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman* 23, 2 (2000) 65–79.

witness to a discourse among independent businesswomen instead of a homoerotic discourse. The opposing stances in the discussion are interwoven with the critics' different perspectives; Van Gemert conducts a semiotic reading while Grabowksy's is biographical. Therefore, their interpretations will never meet in the middle, even though both critics do connect Lescailje's womanhood to the negative discourse on marriage in her poem.

This raises the question of how Lescailje's femininity is significant in her nuptial poetry. Lescailje wrote an enormous amount of nuptial poems, with at least ninety-seven known poems surviving. To my knowledge she was the first woman to participate so actively in this formerly male-dominated genre, which flourished in many European countries during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The corpus of Lescailje's nuptial poetry is thus of particular relevance in addressing women's authorship. The case offers a unique opportunity to look at the appropriation of so-called male genres by women at the end of the seventeenth century.

Research into the differences between male- and female-authored literature is part of a feminist tradition of research into authorship from the perspective of the opposition between hegemonic and marginal social groups.⁴ Since men and women's social position and education differed, contrasts in their work are inevitable. Women authors have always needed to write themselves into existing genres that had moulded them, while they were neither able nor eager to completely adapt to them.⁵ This claim applies especially to the early modern period, as women at that time had a marginal position in public areas like literature. Moreover, social and literary conventions were relatively strict. A woman was not expected to write and publish, at least not outside of family circles. Should she still want to, she had to do it within the boundaries of the literary genres and boundaries established by male predecessors and contemporaries.

The question of female authorship is of the greatest importance with regard to the genre of nuptial poetry.⁶ During the early modern

⁴ Cf. Miller N.K., "Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing and the Reader", in Burke S. (ed.), *Authorship. From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader* (Edinburgh: 2000) 194–195.

⁵ Meijer M., *In tekst gevat. Inleiding tot een kritiek van representatie* (Amsterdam: 1996) 38.

⁶ This specific question is asked in the introduction to the major Dutch anthology of women writers: Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. – Porteman K. (eds.), *Met en zonder*

period political and religious developments created social tensions surrounding various aspects of marriage, which resulted in a polemical discourse on marriage.⁷ As a part of the *querelle des femmes*, women were demonised and men were advised against marriage because of the risk of being overruled by their future wives.⁸ During the seventeenth century, the opposition grew and in several texts of the period, marriage is also disparaged from the female perspective.⁹ Nuptial poetry is of course a genre in which this discourse is bound to play a role.

It is only recently that such suppositions have been given attention in research into the genre of nuptial poetry. Scholarly criticism has tended to neglect the insight that nuptial poetry reflected on society and participated in it, while it also exploited the range of possibilities that the variety of conventions allowed for. Whereas older research focused only on the literary aspects, today the social aspects are also being taken into account, as are the genre's great potential for adaptation.¹⁰ Heather Dubrow's study of the Stuart epithalamium is exemplary of this new approach.¹¹ In it, she examines the interplay between cultural tensions and the formal decisions that poets made in their work; she writes, 'Writing in a genre whose very conservatism made it appealing, Stuart poets often react to cultural tensions subtly, by emphasising or reinterpreting an existing convention'.¹²

A similar approach is required in investigating Lescailje's appropriation of the genre of nuptial poetry. How did a Dutch woman poet manage to appropriate the genre of nuptial poetry at the end of the seventeenth century, while dealing with both the possibilities and restrictions of the literary and social conventions she was exposed to?

lauwerkranen: Schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850. Van Anna Bijns tot Elise van Calcar (Amsterdam: 1997) 8.

⁷ Dubrow H., *A Happier Eden. The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* (Ithaca: 1990) 5–27. Carlin has several publications on this polemical discourse in France, including Carlin C.L., "Imagining Marriage in the 1690s", *Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature* 28, 54 (2001) 167–176.

⁸ Pleij H., "Taakverdeling in het huwelijk. Over literatuur en sociale werkelijkheid in de late middeleeuwen", *Literatuur* 3 (1986) 66–76 and "Wie wordt er bang voor het boze wijf? Vrouwenhaat in de middeleeuwen", *De Revisor* 4, 6 (1977) 38–42; Dresen-Coenders L., "De strijd om de broek. De verhouding man-vrouw in het begin van de moderne tijd (1450–1630)", *De Revisor* 4, 6 (1977) 29–37.

⁹ Dubrow, *A Happier Eden* 20–25 and Carlin, "Imagining Marriage", 169–170.

¹⁰ Blevins J., *Catullan Consciousness and the Early Modern Lyric in England* (Burlington: 2004).

¹¹ Dubrow, *A Happier Eden*.

¹² Dubrow, *A Happier Eden* xii.

The present article aims to answer this question by giving an overview of the poems Lescailje wrote for different groups of addressees, focusing on her use of classical and – more importantly – contemporary conventions. Finally, I will compare Lescailje's nuptial poetry to that of other Dutch women poets. But before exploring these questions in greater depth, I will first introduce the genre and the author central to the present article.

The Nuptial Poetry of Katharina Lescailje

Sappho's poems as well as those of other classical authors deeply influenced the traditions of nuptial poetry in Renaissance Europe.¹³ These classical poems were called epithalamia, referring to folk songs shouted or sung by friends who led the couple to their bridal bed, just before the consummation of the marriage. In later times, however, the word epithalamium referred not only to songs spurring on the consummation, but also to the whole range of nuptial poems. The genre became very popular between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries and was practised by many well-known poets in Europe.

In his *Poetices libri septem* (1561), the Italian scholar Julius Caesar Scaliger prescribed the rhetorical conventions for the epithalamium in the epical tradition of Claudian and Statius – as opposed to epithalamia of the Catullan lyrical tradition. Scaliger and other rhetoricians had great authority, but imitating predecessors and contemporaries seems to have been the common practice.¹⁴ Poets had several optional conventions at their disposal. The poets' freedom to select from a variety of conventions led to diverse applications, but the greater part of early modern nuptial poetry is fairly recognisable as such.¹⁵

¹³ Tufte V., *The Poetry of Marriage. The Epithalamium in Europe and Its Development in England* (Los Angeles: 1970) describes the literary traditions in European epithalamia. If not otherwise stated, information on the genre in this section is from Tufte's book.

¹⁴ This is argued in, among others, Schenkeveld-van der Dussen M.A., "Theorie en poëzie: een epithalamium van Six van Chandelier", *De nieuwe taalgids* 72 (1979) 391–398.

¹⁵ See also Wheeler A.L., "Tradition in the Epithalamium", *The American Journal of Philology* 51, 3 (1930) 205–223 and Babin M., *Epithalamia: Classical Traditions and Changing Responses*, PhD dissertation, University of California (1978) 172–173.

The basis for the epic in nuptial poetry was often a (metaphorical) battle, in which the groom needed to capture the bride. Victory was celebrated when he was successful. Throughout the poem, the bride and groom were praised extensively, for example by reference to their families' achievements and wealth. The greater part of the praise, however, was directed to the bride's beauty and often included a tribute to her virginity. The poems could also include references to both pagan and Christian gods and unions – classical, biblical and faunal ones. The poems ended with the extension of congratulations and blessings, and also referred to the wedding night and the future offspring. However, as early as the classical period, something which might be characterised as an 'anti-epithalamium', which took a negative view to marriage, became discernible in the tradition of the epithalamium. This anti-epithalamium also has to be seen as part of the tradition.¹⁶

The genre of nuptial poetry flourished in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic as it did in other European countries. The epical form of Statius and Claudian was dominant. At the end of the sixteenth century, it was exercised particularly by scholars writing in Latin. The writing of nuptial poetry in Dutch by famous learned poets such as Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft (1581–1647) and Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679) during the first half of the seventeenth century led to widespread publishing of nuptial poetry. The conventions of the genre changed, however. Whereas Hooft and Vondel had imitated the classical traditions in an original manner, in the second half of the seventeenth century, Christian aspects became more important than classical ones.¹⁷ Erotic tension regarding the wedding night was traditionally a reason for the bride to develop doubts about marriage as well as the cause of suggestive jokes. However, this had disappeared from nuptial poetry by the end of the seventeenth century. The dominance of the epical form diminished, too. The genre's reputation diminished among the cultural elite, but its popularity in society at large only increased.¹⁸

¹⁶ Tufte, *The Poetry of Marriage* 37–55 and Dubrow, *A Happier Eden* 2.

¹⁷ In some of Vondel's poems Christian aspects were already dominant, but this was only the case in five of his more than fifty nuptial poems. See Schenkeveld-van der Dussen M.A., "Christus, Hymenaeus of de 'Teelzucht'", in Witstein S.F. – Grootes E.K. (eds.), *Visies op Vondel na honder jaar. Een bundel artikelen ter gelegenheid van de driehonderdste sterfdag van Joost van den Vondel* (The Hague: 1979) 11–25.

¹⁸ On the genre of nuptial poetry in the Dutch Republic see, in addition to Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, "Theorie en poëzie" and "Christus, Hymenaeus", also her

Lescailje's participation in the genre of nuptial poetry reflects these developments.

Katharina Lescailje was a remarkable figure on the Amsterdam literary scene.¹⁹ She was the second daughter of the well-known publisher and poet Jacob Lescaille. Since he was the main publisher for stage plays and was well acquainted with many Amsterdam poets, it is likely that she had been in artistic circles since early childhood. Since the 1720s, the story has gone that when she was eleven years old, the uncontested patriarch of Dutch poetry, Joost van den Vondel, read some of her first poems and encouraged her to become a poet. Whatever the truth value of this story, Lescailje did become a poet. She wrote many poems, some of which were published. She also translated over seven tragedies, six of which were performed at the town theatre and were also published.²⁰ When her father died in 1679, Katharina Lescailje took over the publishing house with her younger sister Aletta, who like Katharina, was unmarried. They kept the publishing house closely bound to the theatre and Katharina was able to publish her own works.

Lescailje moved in the circles of the Amsterdam cultural elite. Many of the occasional poems she wrote were addressed to fellow writers, both men and women. The amount of political poems she wrote, about twenty, is striking considering her position as a woman, but she hardly

articles "Vondel als gelegenheidsdichter en vriend. Het bruiloftsgedicht voor Ioan van de Poll en Duijken van Gerwen", in Eemeren G. – Willaert F. (eds.), *'t Onder-soeck leert. Studies over middeleeuwse en 17-eeuwse literatuur ter nagedachtenis van prof. dr. L. Rens*, (Leuven: 1986) 293–300; "Bruiloftsdichten in de tale Kanaäns: het probleem van de onverstaanbaarheid", *De nieuwe taalgids* 75 (1982) 50–60; "Hochzeitsdichtung und christlicher Glaube. Einige Epithalamien Niederländischer Dichter", *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik A*, 8 (1980) 31–37; "Een bruiloftsdicht van Karel van Mander", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde* 92, 3–4 (1976) 189–202; "Bruilofts- en liefdeslyrick in de 18^e eeuw: de rol van de literaire conventies", *De nieuwe taalgids* 67 (1974) 449–461. Strien T. van (ed.), *Hollantsche Parnas. Nederlandse gedichten uit de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: 1997) 49–51 pays attention to the genre too. Babin, *Epithalamia* 174–177 concludes that English nuptial poetry in later times also diverges more from classical traditions.

¹⁹ On Lescailje, see Gemert L. van, "Katharina Lescailje (Amsterdam, 26 september 1649–Amsterdam, 8 juni 1711). Schrijfster annex uitgeefster", in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. – Porteman K. (eds.) *Met en zonder lauwerkrans* 396–402.

²⁰ One of Lescailje's plays is the subject of Oostrum P. van, "Dutch Interest in 17th- and 18th-century French Tragedies Written by Women", in Dijk S. van et al. (eds.), *I Have Heard About You'. Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf* (Hilversum: 2004) 153–172.

reflects explicitly on her participation in male genres. Moreover, Lescailje seems to quietly adopt most of the conventions upheld by literary men in her environment. Reception history shows how her position was regarded by others as exceptional. In their poetry, her colleagues exalted her as the ‘Nederduitsche Sappho’ (the ‘Dutch Sappho’) and she was asked to write opening poems for their own publications. They made a muse out of her.²¹

The collected works of Lescailje were published by her nephew in 1731, twenty years after her death, as *Tooneel- en mengelpoëzy* (‘Dramatic and mixed poems’). The nuptial poetry is collected in a large section in the second volume called ‘Huwelijkszangen’ (‘Nuptial songs’), with 96 poems. Many of them had been published before in separate publications or compilations of nuptial poetry.²² However, Lescailje must have written more nuptial poems than those 96. In his foreword to her collected works, the publisher states that he did not want to include all of Lescailje’s nuptial poems due to their great number and the fact that Lescailje herself had not been content with all of them.²³ His apparent reserve at including all of her nuptial poems is somewhat strange as my own research has only uncovered one separately printed marriage poem by Lescailje that is not included in the collected works.²⁴

Lescailje started writing nuptial poems for family and friends, and in the course of her career, she also began to write them for people she did not know as well. In this article I will argue that the way she makes use of the conventions depends to a large extent on who the addressee was. In the following sections, I will examine the nuptial poems Lescailje wrote for the different groups of addressees in a more or less chronological order: family members, literary contacts, patrons and Mennonite businessmen. Where possible, I will compare them to poems by other poets written on the same occasion.

²¹ In a work in progress presented at a NEWW meeting, I made some preliminary remarks on the reception of Lescailje: Geerdink N., “Katharina Lescailje: Another Sappho”, online: http://www.womenwriters.nl/index.php/Katharina_Lescailje_%281649-1711%29:_another_Sappho or www.womenwriters.nl/Conferences/NEWWNovembermeetings/2007/Geerdink.

²² References to all the publications of Lescailje’s nuptial poetry can be found in appendix 1 below.

²³ Rank D., “Voorbericht”, in *TMP*.

²⁴ Lescailje Katharina, in *Op het huwelyk van den heer Gerard Reessen, en jongkvrouw Geertruid van der Keere. Getrouwd den viii. van Zomermaand, 1698* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1698).

Family

The first of Lescailje's surviving nuptial poems dates from 1673. It seems she did write some more in the years that followed. Like her other early poems, those first few nuptial poems are addressed to people she was closely acquainted with, in most cases through her father. The first of Lescailje's nuptial poems published separately was written on the occasion of her older sister's wedding in December 1674.²⁵ The poem is fairly conventional, including the groom's conquest to win the love of the shy and embarrassed woman, a good deal of praise and several puns with names. Nevertheless, it is still a personal poem. Lescailje focuses in this poem not on Matthias de Wreedt, the German printer her sister Barbara was going to marry, but on the bride and Lescailje's relationship with her. It leads to a lot of praise for Barbara Lescailje, who is said to be upright, to have a good reputation and to be modest and beautiful.

The praise is fairly conventional – although it focuses on more than the bride's' beauty – but in proportion to the praise for the bridegroom, it exceeds the conventions by far. The same is true of the congratulations at the end of the poem, which are fairly extensive and connected to the sisterly love between bride and poet. Lescailje starts by showing her sisterly duty to wish Barbara all the best:

Paste 't ooit verëende menschen
Heil en voorspoed toe te wenschen,
't Voegt en vloeit nu in myn dicht,
Scherp genoopt door zusterpligt.

If ever it fitted to wish united people
Welfare and prosperity,
It does so now and flows in my poem,
Powerfully prompted by sisterly obligations.

In the following verse, Lescailje emphasises the fact that Barbara will be leaving her home and her younger sister behind. Moreover, she refers to the myth of Procne, whose tongue was cut off by the husband of her sister Philomel, to whom she was very close. The unusual

²⁵ Published in *Huvelykszangen, Ter Bruilofte van de E. Bruidgom Matthias de Wreedt, en de E. Bruidt Barbera Lescailje. In d'Echt verbonden te Amsteldam, den 8/18 van Wintermaand, 1674* (no publisher, no date), and in *TMP* II 8–11. This is the only known nuptial poem Lescailje wrote for a member of her own family.

reference would not have been very flattering to the future husband Matthias de Wreedt, but it reveals Lescailje's sincere concern for her sister's (and her own) future happiness.

The personal perspective also influences Lescailje's self-representation. By representing herself as the younger sister of the bride, the audience is invited to excuse Lescailje for writing and publishing a poem in the first place. It may thus have functioned as a topos of modesty to refer so extensively to sisterhood, which would have been considered relatively appropriate subject matter for women writing in family circles. At the same time, as a poet, Lescailje did not present herself modestly at all by displaying her ability to alter the traditional conventions in a learned manner – such as the use of the uncommon mythological reference. Moreover, as a consequence of Barbara and Katharina's personal connection, it could be argued that the praise in the poem could also apply to Katharina. One compliment supports this interpretation very clearly: Barbara is said to be 'zo teêr als goed gebooren' ('born both tender and honest'). The connotation is, of course, that the same goes for Katharina, who was after all born of the same parents. In presenting herself as the *younger* sister, ready to follow Barbara, Katharina was in fact even placing herself on the matrimonial market:

Zuster, die my in het paaren
Voortreed, als in tal van jaaren,
En om d'Echt, den Maagdestaat,
My, en 's Vaders huis verlaat;

The sister, who in pairing off
Precedes me, as she does in age,
And who, because of Wedlock leaves
Her Virginity, me, and our Father's house;

Because of this self-representation, the identity of the audience is particularly relevant. Lescailje's poem was published in a booklet alongside poems by her acquaintances from the theatre networks of the publishing house. With the exception of two other women poets, Cornelia van der Veer and Suzanna Bormans – both friends of Lescailje and probably of Barbara at the time – the poets represented in the booklet were young males who would later write plays and become important figures in theatre networks. In addition to her family, those networks made up the broader audience for the poem, while at the same time, the other poems create a frame of reference.

What are the similarities and dissimilarities between Lescailje's poem and those by the other male and female authors?²⁶ The compilation opens with the three contributions by women, among which are more dissimilarities than similarities. Lescailje's is the only poem that complies with at least some of the rhetorical conventions of the genre. Suzanna Bormans's poem, the second in the booklet, is very short.²⁷ It focuses on a conventional theme of the epithalamium – Matthias de Wreedt's patience – but the poem's structure does not resemble classical epithalamia at all. The first poem, by Cornelia van der Veer, is more extensive.²⁸ It is a Christian poem with many (biblical) metaphors. Matthias de Wreedt's victory in winning Barbara's love is represented as a victory of God. That Van der Veer does not conform to the rhetorical conventions is explicitly stated in the middle of the poem:

Soo 'k nu een slaghveer kon den Mantuaan ontlennen,
Om 't kostlijk Paar naer eysch te ontmoeten op het Feest,
Dan soud myn sangheldin mé schoeyen op den leest
Der *Konstgenoten*, myn hoogdravende *Mecen*en;
Diens klancken met *Katrijn*, weêrgalmen aen het Y,
[...]
Maar laas! die pogingh is vergeefs my t'onderwinden,
Ik stoof myn sangen best met eygen saus en kruyt,
En schaf dien schôtel op, voor *Bruydegom* en *Bruydt*,

Were it possible to borrow a quill feather from the Mantuan,
To treat the glorious Couple, true to the splendour of their feast,
Then my muse would follow the same pattern
As Fellow artists do, my grandiloquent Maecenas;
Whose sounds together with those of Katrijn, reverberate across the
IJ-river,
[...]
But alas! for me it is vain to make this endeavour,
I stew my songs best in my own sauce and spice,
And serve this dish, for Bridegroom and Bride,

²⁶ I do not address the difference in tone here. It is not surprising that the personal tone of Lescailje is unique in this booklet, since she is the one most closely connected to the bride. Nevertheless, other poems reveal references to some kind of personal commitment too.

²⁷ Suzanna Bormans married the famous poet Joannes Antonides van der Goes 4 years later, see below. Little is known about her poetry.

²⁸ On Cornelia van der Veer: Gemert L. van, "Cornelia van der Veer (Amsterdam, 30 augustus 1639–? na 10 april 1702). Amsterdams initiatief voor publicatie van eigen werk", in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. – Porteman K. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans* 354–362.

Van der Veer creates a contrast between herself and the other poets in the booklet, and the contrast with Katharina (Lescailje) is most explicit. Those 'konstgenoten' ('Fellow artists'), she states, write poems in the rhetorical tradition of classical authors like the Mantuan, i.e. Vergil, whereas she makes her own 'mash'. Nonetheless, by making this contrast she shows her familiarity with those traditions.

Cornelia van der Veer is right: Lescailje's poem bears more resemblance to the male-authored poems in the booklet than the other poems by women. Most of the poems following the three female-authored poems belong, at least thematically, to the classical tradition. The conquest of the bride is central, classical gods must interfere and in the end the poems refer to the wedding night and posterity. War and peace are referred to in most of the poems analogously to conquest and marriage. Both Lescailje and the later theatre director Joan Pluimer open with such a comparison, stating that they, in times of war, will focus on the peaceful love between Barbara and Matthias.

However, there are also differences between Lescailje's poem and the male poets' poems. The playfully erotic hints in some of the male-authored poems are absent in Lescailje's poem. I assume this is motivated by social conventions. The difference in their descriptions of the bride's initial refusal is more interesting. The conventions prescribe initial hesitation for the woman, mostly connected to shyness, shame and anxiety regarding the wedding night. Lescailje adds the loss of freedom the bride accepts when entering into marriage. She introduces a relatively negative discourse on marriage that is not present in the other poems, and is even refuted in the Pieter de la Croix poem, which argues that virgins who reject marriage fail to recognise or respect the importance of love.

We know that with its polarisation of marriage and freedom, Lescailje's negative discourse nevertheless returned in other nuptial poems. Here it is suited to the sisterly tone: while on the one hand it seems that Lescailje does not want her sister to abandon her, on the other hand it seems that she is fervently hoping that her sister will have a happy marriage with her future husband. The negative discourse also relates to Lescailje's representation of herself as a woman who still has her independence. Despite this difference between the poems by Lescailje and the male-authored poems in the booklets, it is important to acknowledge how Lescailje still adheres to the mainly male conventions of the genre, even on a family occasion.

Cultural Networks

Many of the acquaintances to whom Lescailje addressed nuptial poems were people from her cultural networks: the Amsterdam literary scene and its elite circles as well as relatives connected to through the publishing house and theatre world.

In the seventies, Lescailje wrote some nuptial poems for female friends she knew through these cultural networks.²⁹ In them, she wrote extensively about the yoke of marriage and the restrictions it would place on the freedom of women. An extremely negative example is the aforementioned poem for Sara de Canjoncle (1677) in which Lescailje emphasises her personal relationship with the bride by focussing on her instead of her future husband and also by calling her ‘myne Speelgenoot’ (‘my companion’).³⁰ The same goes for the poem on the marriage of Suzanne Engelbrecht and Abraham van Koppenol (1673), in which the praise for Engelbrecht exceeds the praise for Van Koppenol many times over. Moreover, Lescailje represents herself in this poem as writing with the ‘maagdepen’ (‘pen of a virgin’), which focuses on marriage rather than on war as the pens of men do.³¹ By referring to herself as a virgin, Lescailje simultaneously links herself to Suzanne Engelbrecht, whose virginity is mentioned several times in the poem, and to a larger group of honourable women possessing that same virginal moral strength.

The anti-marriage discourse in these poems has the same dual function as in the poem for her sister’s wedding. The emphasis on how the friends are abandoning Lescailje by marrying foregrounds her personal commitment. But, at the same time, the discourse can be interpreted as part of Lescailje’s self-representation as a poet. Unmarried, she is still free and independent and therefore has all the time in the world to, for example, write poems. This interpretation is supported

²⁹ I refer here to the poems for Suzanne Engelbrecht, Sara de Canjoncle, Suzanna Bormans and Maria Wiebouts, published in *TMP* II 3–7, 16–18, 19–22, 81–84. Suzanne Engelbrecht is said to sing beautifully in the poem. Sara de Canjoncle was the cousin of the two poets Sara de Canjoncle (II) and Jan de Canjoncle. Suzanna Bormans wrote poetry herself and later married Joannes Antonides van der Goes. Maria Wiebouts, who also wrote poetry herself, had been married to the savant Joan Blasius.

³⁰ On the negative discourse in this poem, see Gemert, “Hiding Behind Words?” and “De vrouwenzucht”.

³¹ In the meantime, Lescailje did write poems on the ongoing war. Therefore, the contrast between her and the male poets can best be read as a topos (of modesty).

by poems for other (male and female) poets who were well-known and respected in the Dutch Republic, or at least in the province of Holland. In those poems, Lescailje represents herself as woman of letters, as the focus is more on literary networks and less on the personal aspect, although in most cases there must have been some kind of friendship between Lescailje and the poet addressees.

An early example is the poem Lescailje wrote for her friend Suzanna Bormans's marriage to the famous poet Joannes Antonides van der Goes in 1678. It is the opening poem of a booklet with nuptial poems by several poets – all men except for Lescailje.³² The focus in Lescailje's poem is on Antonides van der Goes. The bride is praised extensively, but Lescailje attends to the future husband. This is part of Lescailje's self-representation as a poet.

The poem differs significantly from Lescailje's other nuptial poems. In this poem, there is no conquest. Van der Goes does not need to win Bormans's love. The poem is presented as a description of the wedding celebration and focuses on the poems written to celebrate it:

Apollo komt uw Echt bekroonen,
En noopt de Dichters tot uw lof;
Zy zwemmen in een zee van stof,
Nu de allerwaardste van zyn Zoonen,
Naar zyne godheid best geëard,
Met een der Zanggodinnen paart,

Apollo will reward your [Antonides's] Wedlock,
And prompts the Poets to sing your praises;
Afloat a teeming sea of material,
Now the most valuable of his Sons,
Best resembling his deity,
Couples with one of the Muses,

Lescailje states here how 'de Dichters' ('the Poets') all praise the bridegroom, without identifying who these poets are. Since she also leaves implicit how she herself relates to the poets, the reader is subtly led to think of her as a member of that group of poets. After all, Lescailje praises Antonides van der Goes in a literary manner, in the foregoing and following lines. The supposition that Lescailje belongs to the

³² *Ter bruilofte van den heere Joannes Antonides van der Goes, der Medicijnen doctor, en mejuffrouw Suzanna Bormans* (Rotterdam, Abraham van Waesberghe: 1678).

group of literary poets is maintained throughout the poem. She writes for example:

Nu strooit het kunstenweekend Y
 Een vrucht'bre lent' van Poëzy,
 Cultivating the arts, now the IJ
 Strews forth a fruitful spring of Poetry,

The poems for the wedding originate in the city of Amsterdam (the IJ is an important river in Amsterdam), Lescailje's hometown. Later on, the river running through Antonides van der Goes's hometown, Rotterdam ("De Maasstroom", 61), is also mentioned, but the Amsterdam poetry is mentioned first and most extensively. In the last part of the poem, Lescailje reemphasises her own membership in the group of poets by extending the traditional wish for offspring on behalf of the 'Zangberg' (Parnassus):

De Zangberg is reeds in verlangen,
 En ziet uit uwen Echt te moet
 Een Vrucht, die volg' zyn vaders voet,
 En 't Spoor van uwe Heldezangen.
 Mount Parnassus is already longing,
 And looks forward to the Issue of
 Your Wedlock, that must follow in his father's footsteps,
 And the trail of your Heroic song.

The other poets in the booklet also focus on Antonides van der Goes and emphasise the literary status of bride and groom. However, the representation of their own poethood is more explicit. Moreover, in the male-authored poems more references are made to literary (net) works. Shortly before the wedding, Antonides van der Goes had broken with the important literary society *Nil volentibus arduum*. This rift is mentioned and commented on in various poems. Most poets seem to prefer, like Lescailje, the literary themes to the traditional conventions of the nuptial poem – except for the conventional extension of wishes for (literary) offspring and the inclusion in some poems of a description of the conquest.

Remarkably, in two of the poems the conquest depicted is not the groom's conquest of the bride, but Love's conquest of Antonides van der Goes. Joan Pluimer and David van Hoogstraten speculate that Antonides van der Goes has been talked into love. They fear his literary activities may cease and Pluimer even talks of the marriage as

a prison and a disaster for the bridegroom's freedom. In this way it approximates Lescailje's anti-marriage discourse while retaining the perspective of the man, upon whom, it seems, marriage made less of an impact than on the bride. Why should Antonides van der Goes stop writing poems after marrying? This suggests that the reversal and exaggeration of the topos gave the poets the opportunity to emphasise Antonides van der Goes's worth as a poet.

Lescailje, however, seems to avoid this discourse in the poems she composed for famous male poets,³³ whereas she used it in poems for celebrated female poets. At least this is the case in the poem she wrote on the occasion of the marriage of the Haarlem poet Elisabeth Hoofman, to Pieter Koolaert in 1693.³⁴ In this poem Lescailje again emphasises her literary connection to the poet – the bride in this case – and she represents herself as a woman of letters as she did in the poems for male colleagues. But in this poem for a female colleague, Lescailje also wonders why the bride decided to marry and in so doing give up the laurels she had gained through her literary activities. Lescailje composed this poem more in keeping with the conventions of the genre. This is clear from the extensive depiction of the conquest; Elisabeth Hoofman had taken some convincing to accept the proposal of marriage. The use of the anti-marriage discourse, however, can be read as part of the representation of Lescailje's own poethood, an interpretation I have already advanced in the analysis of earlier poems for female literary friends. With this poem, Lescailje created an image of herself as an unmarried woman, able to put all of her time into poetry and gaining laurels, as opposed to the soon to be married Elisabeth Hoofman. It is therefore significant that the other poets

³³ Cf. the poem Lescailje wrote several years later (1685) for a poet with a comparable position in literary circles, David van Hoogstraten, published in *Parnaskranssen gevlogten op het Huwelyk van den Heere David van Hoogstraten, Der Medicinen Doctor, en Mejuffrou Maria van Nispen. Voltrokken te Dordrecht den 28. Van Lentemaend 1685* (Dordrecht, Jan van Hoogstraten: 1685) and in *TMP* II 59–61.

³⁴ This poem was published in *Op het Huwelyk van den Heer Pieter Koolaert, En Mejuffrouw Elizabeth Hoofman. Getrouwd in Haarlem, den 23 van Oegstmaand, 1693* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1693) and in *TMP* II 114–120. On Elisabeth Hoofman: Strien T. van, "Elisabeth Hoofman (Haarlem, 23 februari 1664–Kassel, 4 juli 1736). Dichtertelijke documenten uit een veelbewogen leven", in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. – Porteman K. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans* 441–444. Another example is the poem for Juliana van der Schelling (1695, published separately and in *TMP* II 143–149), a learned poet who apparently translated Ovid. We know very little about her, so her literary status is less clear than the status of Elisabeth Hoofman.

who wrote nuptial poems for Elisabeth Hoofman, including David van Hoogstraten and Joan Pluimer, scarcely mention this topic, whereas they did mention it in the poems for Antonides van der Goes, a poet of their own sex.

In conclusion, it can be said that the nuptial poetry Lescailje composed for members of her literary circles aimed at strengthening bonds – those with other female writers by emphasising their (former) freedom and those with (famous) male poets by emphasising shared poethood. Moreover, the poetry served as a platform for Lescailje's self-representation as a poet – not only by connecting herself to other poets, but also through the focus on poetry, (her own) poethood and the representation of herself as a free woman with time for literary activities.

Patrons

Lescailje's nuptial poetry includes several poems for people with a presumably higher social status than her own. I will refer to them as 'patrons', although I am not completely sure what the precise character of their relationship with Lescailje was. The generally acknowledged definition of patronage comprises three elements: a relationship of patronage is a reciprocal, personal and long-term relationship between two asymmetrical parties.³⁵ For the people addressed in the nuptial poetry central to this section, at least two of the three elements of patronage are present.³⁶ They lived and worked in a higher social stratum than Lescailje did. Since Lescailje addressed them not only in nuptial poems, but also in other poems written over a longer period which in many cases reveal personal interaction between them such as visits, the personal and lasting bond is also accounted for. What I cannot judge is the reciprocity of these relationships. There is little proof of exchange of capital between Lescailje and those who I suppose were patrons, except for the poems themselves and the mentions of visits. The poetry does however intimate that some kind of reciprocity was likely.

³⁵ This definition can be found in, for example, Nauta R.R., *Poetry for Patrons: Literary Communication in the Age of Domitian* (Leiden: 2002).

³⁶ Most evidently, this is the case in poems for members of the families Amya, Blaeu, Van Zon and Smids.

A first set of poems for patrons are the nuptial poems written for members of the Blaeu family. As fellow printers, the Lescailjes and the Blaeus were closely connected. The interaction between Katharina's father Jacob Lescailje and the elder Joan Blaeu (1596–1673) in particular must have been fairly intense. One of Katharina's stepbrothers, Joan van Dorsten, had also worked for the Blaeu company. Unlike Jacob Lescaille, Joan Blaeu was famous all over the world because of his atlases, and several members of his family held government jobs in the city of Amsterdam.³⁷ Katharina Lescailje wrote nuptial poems for some of Joan Blaeu's children, who all married members of the Amsterdam governmental elite.³⁸ Although these children were part of Lescailje's generation, the poems exhibit a remarkably distant admiration. The personal connection between author and addressee or the fact they had the same profession is not mentioned at all. The Blaeu descendant, male or female, stays at the centre of each poem and is given great praise, either for his or her artistic, scientific or governing merits, which were said to contribute to the fame and prospects of the city of Amsterdam. The traditional conquest is only dominant in the poem for Louize Blaeu, although her doubts about marriage stem not from the typical causes of fear and shyness, but from the impending loss of her artistic and scientific occupations – a fainter version of the anti-marriage discourse. The same is said in the poems for the male Blaeus – a reversal of the traditional conquest. Paradoxically, the Blaeu children's occupations and their government jobs are also used as arguments to convince them to marry. They must pass down their merits to posterity for the sake of Amsterdam. Lescailje thus again adapts the conventions of the genre to suit the aim of the poems, namely, to express great admiration for the Blaeu family.

This is also the case in the nuptial poem Lescailje wrote for Willem van Zon and Helena van der Hek in 1687.³⁹ In this poem, however, the reversal also accounts for the consolidation of Lescailje's relationship with her patron. Willem van Zon (1653–1713) descended from a

³⁷ Donkersloot-de Vrij M., *Drie generaties Blaeu: Amsterdamse cartografie en boekdrukkunst in de zeventiende eeuw* (Zutphen: 1992) 45–47. Grabowsky, "Katharina Lescailje" 74 states that Joan van Dorsten worked for the Blaeu family.

³⁸ She wrote poems for the weddings of Joan Geerkens and Louize Jakobe Blaeu (1676, *TMP* II 12–15), Joan Blaeu jr. and Eva van Neck (1679, *TMP* II 23–26), and Pieter Blaeu and Geertruid Alewyn (1690, *TMP* II 99–104).

³⁹ *TMP* II 66–70. Lescailje wrote a second poem on the same marriage on behalf of Maria Barnsteen, Van Zon's maid (*TMP* II 71).

Rotterdam family which had made its fortune in the Baltic Sea trade. He lived in Utrecht, where he was 'Domheer van Oudmunster', an honourable profession only practised by city dignitaries.⁴⁰ Lescailje wrote many poems for Willem van Zon and after 1687, also for his family. The poems refer to Van Zon's interest in Lescailje's literary activities and a close relationship between him and the poet. Lescailje emphasises this connection in his nuptial poem:

Zou myne Zangmeestres, in zo veel plechtigheden
 En uitgelaaten vreugd, niet mee ten reyë gaan?
 En in uw bruiloftspalm, laurier en mirtheblaân
 Haar vaerzen mengen, om door uwe min te leeven?
 O ja! Zy voelt haar van uw vriendschap aangedreeven,
 En, door uw huwlykstoorts bescheenen en verlicht,
 Zingt zy, in schaduw van uw liefde, haar gedicht.

Why would my Muse, in so many ceremonies
 And such exalted merriment, not join in the chorus?
 And to your bridal palm, laurel and myrtle,
 Add her verses in order to live through your love?
 O yes! She feels urged by your friendship,
 And, enlightened and illuminated by your marital torch,
 She sings, in the shadow of your love, her poem.

This emphasis on a personal relationship with a man is highly unusual in the nuptial poetry of Lescailje. In the reversal of the conquest following the introduction, the relationship is stressed again implicitly. Lescailje argues that Van Zon had not wanted to marry previously because he was already in love, with his freedom. Van Zon is portrayed as having achieved wisdom in his 'boekvertrek' (study) where he was engaged in practising literature. With this reversal of the anti-marriage discourse, Lescailje implicitly refers to her own activities and what they signify to Van Zon.

In other nuptial poems for patrons, such as the one for the rich Hermannus Amya, who was in the theatre business, and the one for the woman believed to be his sister, Lescailje does not emphasise her personal relationship with the addressees very much, but she is less distant here than in the poems for the Blaeus.⁴¹ Apparently, Lescailje had

⁴⁰ On the profession of Van Zon: Hoven van Genderen B. van den, *De heren van de Kerk. De kanunniken van Oudmunster te Utrecht in de late Middeleeuwen* (Zutphen: 1997).

⁴¹ The poem for Hermannus Amya and Catharina Vogelaar is published in *TMP* II 41–46, and in the booklet *Op het huwelyk van den heer Hermannus Amya, en jongkvrouw Catharina de Vogelaar. Getrouwd in Amsterdam, den 19 van Wijnmaand 1683* (no publisher,

different relationships with these people and the nuptial poems were adjusted to suit the relationship. This is also clear from poems by other poets – all connected to the Amsterdam theatre world and appreciated in literary networks – written to celebrate Hermannus Amya's marriage. The degree of intimacy in their poems differs greatly, as does the description of the conquest. In the poems in the booklet, the descriptions range from absent to very present, and the focus varies from bride to groom or both. In her poem for Harmannus Amya, Lescailje describes how both bride and groom needed to be convinced by Love, because they were otherwise occupied and loved their freedom. The negative discourse on marriage in the poems for patrons is used to expand the ways in which she can praise them or strengthen her relationship with them. These reasons were apparently important enough for her to make the discourse work both ways, since Lescailje describes the loss of freedom for grooms too – something she avoided in the poems for male poets.

Commissioned Nuptial Poems

About a third of Lescailje's marriage poems is addressed to members of networks of Mennonite businessmen who lived in Amsterdam and Haarlem. These poems were written between 1685 and 1708. It seems that scarcely any of these Mennonites played an important role in Lescailje's own networks, since she did not write anything other than nuptial poems for them and there is no other evidence of a close relationship between them. Moreover, other people who wrote poems for the same Mennonite merchants, sometimes in the same booklets as Lescailje, were not the poets we normally encounter in Lescailje's (net)works. For this reason, it does not seem very plausible that Lescailje wrote poems for this group in order to obtain or consolidate social contacts. Why then, did she write such a large amount of nuptial poetry for Mennonite businessmen?

no date). The poem for Anna Rebekka Amya and Carel Hartsingh only survived in *TMP* II 35–40. On Hermannus Amya see Winkel J. te, *De ontwikkelingsgang der Nederlandsche letterkunde* V (Haarlem: 1924) 487, 492, 494; Kooijmans L., *De doodskunstenaar: de anatomische lessen van Frederik Ruysch* (Amsterdam: 2004) 218; Sterck J.F.M., *Uit het Amsterdamsche tooneelven op het einde der xviie eeuw* (Leiden: 1913).

The reason has to be a financial one.⁴² A group of Mennonites had become very wealthy in the second half of the seventeenth century.⁴³ Their wealth revealed itself for example in the extravagant festivities they organised in honour of marriages and the important role that collections of nuptial poetry played in those festivities, as they were distributed among the guests.⁴⁴ The bridal couple's prestige was increased by gathering as many poems as possible. The poems were often written by family or friends who were not known as poets. Occasionally though, more or less famous poets were also asked to write a poem; the more famous the poet, the better it was for the reputation of the bridal couple.⁴⁵ Lescailje wrote more nuptial poems for Mennonite circles than any of her fellow Amsterdam poets, and her poems were almost always first in the collections. Although receiving money for poems was not that normal at the end of the seventeenth century and there is no proof of payments made by Mennonite businessmen to Lescailje, it is probable that she made money from the commissions by

⁴² 'I have elaborated the following argument in Geerdink N., "U vraagt, wij draaien? De huwelijksgedichten van Katharina Lescailje (1649–1711) voor rijke doopsgezinden" to be published in *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 35–36 (2010)'.

⁴³ On the assimilation of Mennonites in the Dutch Republic: Visser P., "Mennonites and Doopsgezinden in the Netherlands, 1535–1700", in Roth J.D. – Stayer J.M. (eds.), *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521–1700* (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 299–345; Visser P., "Aspects of Social Criticism and Cultural Assimilation: The Mennonite Image in Literature and Self-Criticism of Literary Mennonites", in Hamilton A. – Voolstra S. – Visser P. (eds.), *From Martyr to Muppy. A Historical Introduction to Cultural Assimilation Processes of a Religious Minority in the Netherlands: the Mennonites* (Amsterdam: 1994) 67–82; Welcker J.M., "Het dagelijks brood. De doopsgezinden, de economie en de demografie", in Groenveld S. – Jacobszoon J.P. – Verheus S.L. (eds.), *Wederdopers, menisten, doopsgezinden in Nederland 1530–1980* (Zutphen: 1980) 195–218.

⁴⁴ On the extravagant festivities see Visser, "Aspects of Social Criticism" 76. Remarkably, there has thus far been little attention paid to the nuptial poems written for the wealthy Mennonites. The most important source seems to be Smit K., *Pieter Langendijk* (Hilversum: 2000) 51, 138–140, 198. However, it is easy to find enormous amounts of nuptial poetry for Amsterdam and Haarlem Mennonites through a catalogue search of occasional poetry: Bouman J., *Nederlandse gelegenheidsgedichten voor 1700 in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te 's-Gravenhage: Catalogus van gedrukte gedichten op gedenkwaardige gebeurtenissen in het leven van particuliere personen* (The Hague: 1982); Daamen M. – Meijer A., *Catalogus van gedrukte Nederlandse gelegenheidsgedichten uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw in de Zeeuwse Bibliotheek te Middelburg* (Middelburg: 1990); Steur A.G. van der, *Catalogus 28: Gelegenheidsgedichten. Los verschenen gedrukte gelegenheidsgedichten op Nederlandse personen, 17e–20e eeuw* (Haarlem: 2004). An overview of some Haarlem poems can be found in Nieuweboer A., "Haarlems literair leven in gelegenheidsgedichten (1680–1770)", in Grootes E.K. (ed.), *Haarlems helicon. Literatuur en toneel te Haarlem vóór 1800* (Hilversum: 1993) 187–201 – she does not, however, problematise the Mennonite background of the bridal couple.

⁴⁵ See also Smit, *Pieter Langendijk* 139.

printing the complete booklets.⁴⁶ Not all booklets identify their printers, but when they do, it is clear time and again that the booklets for which Lescaijle wrote the opening poem were printed by her own publishing house. This leads to the assumption that she gained printing commissions by offering to write nuptial poetry. How does this assumption influence the poems?

Lescaijle's attitude in the nuptial poems she wrote for Mennonites is relatively in line with the conventional topoi. Both author and addressee are mostly absent. Lescaijle does not use the first person much and does not refer to any personal connections between her and the bridal couple. The bridegroom is addressed in almost all of the poems, but we do not learn much about him or his bride – who is scarcely addressed in these poems, with the exception of the congratulations at the end of each poem, which are directed to the couple. Of course several references are made in praise of the bride and groom's virtuousness, as well as frequent remarks about how highly the groom values his diligence. Trade, therefore, is a dominant theme in many of these poems. The conventional praise reveals the distance between Lescaijle and the bridal couple, in contrast to other poems where Lescaijle makes clear her connection to the addressees or at least tries to create a connection.

Except for the praise, however, the poems Lescaijle wrote for the Mennonite businessmen are not that conventional. In contrast to the conventions of traditional epithalamia, in the Mennonite nuptial poems the bridegroom encounters few difficulties in winning the bride's hand and as a consequence, marriage is represented in very laudatory terms. Love, given from God, is said to be the basis of everything, most importantly procreation, but also sociability. In this respect, these particular nuptial poems by Lescaijle are more in the Christian-moralistic tradition of Cats and his imitators than in the tradition of the classical epithalamia, which was more dominant and more appreciated in

⁴⁶ More research into poetry and payment remains to be done, but generally, it is assumed that in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, it was not the custom to pay for poems. See Spies M., "Betaald werk? Poëzie als ambacht in de 17e eeuw", *Holland. Themnummer Kunst in opdracht in de Gouden Eeuw* 23 (1991) 210–224. Drees J., *Die Soziale Funktion der Gelegenheitsdichtung. Studien zur Deutschsprachigen Gelegenheitsdichtung in Stockholm zwischen 1613 und 1719* (Stockholm: 1986) provides, however, some proof that in late seventeenth-century Sweden some poets were paid for their efforts.

Lescailje's circles.⁴⁷ In her other nuptial poems, the conquest is portrayed as being more fierce and the tone regarding marriage tends to be more negative. This may explain the frequency of lyrical passages in her poems for Mennonites and the relatively large amount of lyrical poems she wrote for them. Lescailje normally tended to write epical nuptial poetry, but for this group she wrote more lyric poetry.

Other people who wrote for the same Mennonite tradesmen, particularly male Mennonites whose poetic endeavours were focused on writing nuptial poetry,⁴⁸ wrote poems with a personal dimension. At least their focus tended to include the whole family instead of just the bride and groom. Grandfathers and fathers are addressed or presented as speakers in the poems. The future offspring are also praised extensively. This shows the poet's personal commitment to the bridal couple. This is further emphasised by a secondary focus on the wedding celebration, which the poets would have attended. However, the discourse about marriage and conquest can be compared to the discourse in the poems Lescailje wrote for Mennonites, although the poems of Mennonite male poets were more firmly rooted in a religious framework.

The comparison with other poems for the same addressees, written by Mennonites who were often part of the same networks as the bridal couple, shows how Lescailje conformed to the desired conventions of her audience and its social network. She could not give the poems much of a personal touch, but she did alter her discourse on marriage to suit the discourse practised by her audience. It seems that Lescailje simply prepared what she was commissioned to write.

⁴⁷ See Bornemann U., "Die Gelegenheitsdichtung am Beispiel der Hochzeitsdichtung", in Bornemann U. (ed.), *Anlehnung und Abgrenzung. Untersuchungen zur Rezeption der niederländischen Literatur in der deutschen Dichtungsreform des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Assen – Amsterdam: 1976) 182–191 on Cats's moralistic nuptial poetry. The use of predominantly Christian elements in nuptial poetry is a trend that emerged towards the end of the seventeenth century in the Dutch Republic. It is worth noting in this context that it was the Mennonite Karel van Mander who originated this trend in the Dutch Republic: see Schenkeveld-van der Dussen M.A., "Poëzie als gebruiksartikel: gelegenheidsgedichten in de zeventiende eeuw", in Spies M. (ed.), *Historische letterkunde. Facetten van vakbeoefening* (Groningen: 1984) 83; Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, "Christus, Hymenaeus" and "Hochzeitsdichtung".

⁴⁸ The most well-known is Anthony Janssens, father of the famous Antonides van der Goes. He wrote over 175 nuptial poems, cf. Daamen – Meijer, *Catalogus* 11–15. For more names of authors see the list of separate publications of marriage poetry in appendix 1 below.

Yet there is one aspect of these poems which can be connected to Lescailje's self-representation. In some of the poems for Mennonite marriages, Lescailje extensively describes how brides or the mothers of the brides were self-employed – this was not normally the case in other poems, in which she scarcely pays attention to the life of the bride or her mother.⁴⁹ The praise for these women can of course also be applied to Lescailje herself.

Lescailje versus other Dutch Women

The developments in the genre of nuptial poetry in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic described in the introductory section of this article could lead to the assumption that the genre gradually came more into women's reach. At any rate, there were no longer aspects of the genre that they were not able to adapt because of a lack of education or a threat to their honour and respectability. In addition, during the seventeenth century writing poetry became more and more a social activity and as such it was also practised by women, who started writing by appropriating social conventions.⁵⁰ Since nuptial poetry and its growth were examples of this tendency, one would expect women to adopt this genre too.

And indeed, the number of women participating in the genre did increase in the Dutch Republic. Before, there had been exceptions such as Anna Bijns (1493–1575)⁵¹ and Anna Roemersdochter Vischer (1583–1651),⁵² but it was not until the last decades of the seventeenth century that more women began to participate in the genre. However, the number of women participating in the genre in fact remained relatively small: the amount of nuptial poems Lescailje wrote far exceeds that of other women.⁵³

⁴⁹ See *TMP* II 95–98, 170–173; 187–191.

⁵⁰ Jeu A. de, *'t Spoor der dichtersessen'. Netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van schrijvende vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: 2000) 32.

⁵¹ Cf. Pleij H. (ed.), *'t Is al vrouwenwerk. Refreinen van Anna Bijns* (Amsterdam: 1987) 117–125. On Anna Bijns see also Porteman K., "Anna Bijns (Antwerpen, 1493 – Antwerpen, 1575). De ster van de rederijkers", in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. – Porteman K. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans* 107–117.

⁵² Cf. Jeu, *'t Spoor der dichtersessen'* 195.

⁵³ There seems to be no difference between the Dutch Republic and other European countries in this respect. It is of some significance that Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R., "Met en zonder lauwerkrans in an International Perspective", in Dijk S. van –

I found twenty-two printed poems, written by eleven women in the period 1660–1720.⁵⁴ The majority of the poems were obviously written for people the women knew, and it is rare for one woman to have written more than one or two poems that have survived. The amount of nuptial poetry Anna Maria Paauw wrote (seven poems) is thus exceptional.⁵⁵ We have seen how for Lescailje, the nuptial poems had an important function in different respects, and led to specific adaptations of classical and contemporary conventions. How do nuptial poems by other women relate to Lescailje's?

I have already mentioned that Suzanna Bormans wrote a short and not very ambitious poem for Lescailje's sister, while on the same occasion, Cornelia van der Veer explicitly dissociated herself from the conventions among male poets. In a second poem by Cornelia van der Veer, written in 1676, she again sets herself apart from authors who wrote traditional nuptial poems. Van der Veer wonders at the start of the poem who she can ask for inspiration, only to answer herself that she in any case does not want to ask a pagan god to inspire a poem

Gemert L. van – Ottway S., *Writing the History of Women's Writing. Toward an International Approach* (Amsterdam: 2001) 239–250 in a comparison of literature by seventeenth-century women from different European countries, does not mention the genre. Dubrow mentions only Katherine Philips (1632–1664) as an English woman poet of epithalamia: Dubrow, *A Happier Eden* x. Other publications on English nuptial poetry also only sporadically mention women: Tufte V., *High Wedlock Then Be Honoured: Wedding Poems from Nineteen Countries and Twenty-Five Centuries* (London: 1970) 87 mentions Anne Bradstreet (ca. 1612–1672), who wrote a poem for her husband. Babin, *Epithalamia* 186 mentions a satirical nuptial poem by Mary Wortley, Lady Montagu (1690–1762). Case R.H., *English Epithalamies* (London: 1896) lvii mentions Susannah Centlivre, who wrote a nuptial song in 1711.

⁵⁴ See appendix 2 for the entries of the nuptial poems by women. I left out possible handwritten nuptial poems by women that functioned in the familiar context of the marriage of friends or family. I thus only counted poems printed separately or in a booklet of nuptial poems. Katharina Johanna de With published some more nuptial poems along with her pastoral plays, but since we do not know whether those poems were printed on the occasion of the wedding, I regarded them as handwritten. They are to be found in With K.J. de, *Fillis van Scirus, herdersspel* (Amsterdam, Adriaan Wor and Erven G. Onder de Linden: 1728) and With K.J. de, *De getrouwe herderin* (Rotterdam, Arnold Willis: 1719). I found one poem that only exists in manuscript. It is by Elizabet Senten and was written for her mother's wedding in 1690. It is a short poem by a supposedly young daughter in which she promises to accept her mother's new husband as a new father. She also emphasises her filial obedience. The poem is in handwriting on the back of *Houwelykslof. Ter bruilofte van Theodorus van Born, met Maria vander Schuuren* (Amsterdam, Dirk Boeteman: 1690) [PBZ Gel. Ged. 133]

⁵⁵ On Anna Maria Paauw: Jeu, A. de, "Anna Maria Paauw (Den Haag ? – Gouda, 21 oktober 1710", in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. – Porteman K. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans* 431–435.

for this ‘heavenly’ marriage. Indeed, the poem does not refer at all to any classical myths but to biblical stories and persons instead. It is a Christian poem, although Van der Veer does comply with some of the conventions of the epithalamium, such as the bride’s doubts (because of her purity) and the reference to future generations at the end of the poem. Van der Veer’s poem resembles the poems by Neeltje Beths.⁵⁶ Beths also wrote only Christian poems in which she explicitly rejected pagan traditions.

Unlike Van der Veer, Beths only wrote poems addressed to family. She makes this familiarity explicit in the poem she wrote for her son’s wedding in 1696. References to the personal relationships between the poet and the bride or groom also occur in the poetry of Anna Insma de Bruyn, Sara Kopyn, Katarina van Meersch and Paschyna van Mazeik. Implicitly, the family relationships are the exceptional reason that these poems were composed. In the poem by Paschyna van Mazeik, of whom nothing is known apart from this poem, the familiarity between author and addressee is particularly salient:

Om myn genegentheid aan u te laten blyken,
Eerwaarde Nicht, moest ik uw bruiloftsfeest verrijken;
Gelijk men voor de bruid de beste schotel zet,
U toetediennen met myn beste dichtbanket.

As a token of my affection for you,
Dearest Cousin, I had to enrich your wedding feast;
Just as one serves the bride the best dish,
It behooves me to serve you my best poetry banquet.

There is one poem in which references to either personal contacts or the classical tradition are wholly absent. This poem by Femmetje de Bruin, who moved in religious circles, is exceptional within the corpus of women’s nuptial poetry because of its intensely religious character.⁵⁷ However, like the other female-authored poems I have described thus far, it is also free of any literary ambitions.

There are only a few female poets who seem to have had literary ambitions: Katharina de With (1691–1728) from Utrecht and Anna

⁵⁶ There is little biographical information on Neeltje Dirksdochter Beths. She was married to Hendrik Lambertsz. ten Cate, a son of the famous Mennonite linguist Lambert ten Cate. She signed one of her nuptial poems as N. Ten Kate.

⁵⁷ Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, “Bruiloftsdichten in de tale Kanaäns” reflects on this kind of nuptial poetry.

Maria Paauw (?–1710) from Gouda.⁵⁸ They wrote social poetry within their own elite circles. The nuptial poems they wrote also functioned within the Utrecht and Gouda elite context. Both had their own styles, which differed from the conventional nuptial poetry of the end of the seventeenth century. De With only wrote pastoral nuptial poetry. Her other occasional poetry was also pastoral and we know she had connections in circles of pastoral poets she knew through her father, including Pieter Vlaming and Jan Baptista Wellekens. De With's nuptial poetry should therefore be seen as both a means of networking (within the elite circles of Utrecht) and as part of a literary self-representation. Paauw's poems seemed to have had the same dual function. Paauw wrote evocative, long, epical poems full of classical mythology – just like her other occasional poetry. Her poems share little resemblance to other nuptial poems written at the end of the seventeenth century. Her literary ambitions, however, are obvious – in fact they are often too obvious.

In sum, women wrote different kinds of nuptial poetry. How they used the genre apparently depended on their specific aims. In certain circles it was common enough for women to write nuptial poetry, but publishing it or being commissioned to write it was often impossible or simply unnecessary. Lescailje, however, had these opportunities because she had her own publishing house and literary fame. Furthermore, she needed to do so because she had to make her own living.

Concluding Remarks

It seems inaccurate to speak of the female transformation of a genre like nuptial poetry. As opposed to some of her female colleagues, most of Lescailje's nuptial poetry conforms to the conventions practised by her contemporaries. Like them, she was able to adapt those conven-

⁵⁸ On Katharina de With: Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R., "Katharina Johanna de With (gedoopt Utrecht, 13 februari 1691 – Utrecht, 16 februari 1728). Een pastorale vrouwenkring", in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. – Porteman K. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans* 495–498. Henriëtte Elisabeth de With, one of Katharina's sisters, also wrote nuptial poetry. There is little known about her, but her poetry seems comparable to her sister's. I found two nuptial poems by Henriëtte Elisabeth, among them one pastoral poem. The sisters De With also wrote a pastoral dialogue together to commemorate a marriage, but there is no separate publication of this poem. It is printed in De With, *Fillis van Scirus* 280–285.

tions to the specific contexts of her poems. This interplay between the social and literary concerns determined the character of the nuptial poems. Still, the appropriation of the genre by individual women can to a large extent be attributed to their womanhood.

An illustration of this can be found in the way Lescailje plays with the conventions regarding the bride's doubts in many of her nuptial poems. Lescailje introduces a theme of freedom within a discourse of negative attitudes towards marriage. The theme is used in many different ways and applies to both literary traditions and social relationships. Traditionally, the bride's doubts are attributed to her shyness and purity – she fears the wedding night. The total absence of these characteristics in the poems of Lescailje can be provisionally interpreted as adhering to a feminist position. Indeed, she instead combines the doubts about marriage with an aversion to marriage that is inspired by the loss of freedom. Moreover, in some cases Lescailje also projects the doubts about marriage onto the groom. These combined factors determine her position in the polemical discourse regarding marriage and womanhood, as described in the introduction. We have seen above how Lescailje's contemporaries also occasionally used this negative discourse about marriage and freedom.

Lescailje thus operates in an existing framework of conventions, but she combines, reverses and exaggerates aspects of it. She does so according to social circumstances. For example, in the poems for her friend Sara de Canjoncle or her patron Willem van Zon, Lescailje uses the negative discourse to emphasise the bond between herself and the bride or groom. The praise for the bridal couple is also increased by it: in emphasising the loss of freedom, Lescailje is able to better express the merits the bride or groom has acquired so far. This function is also present in the poem for Willem van Zon. Another use of the theme is to stress her own openness to becoming a future bride, which only occurs in early poems. Finally, the theme is also used to represent poethood and womanhood.

Although Lescailje does not refer to her own womanhood in most of her nuptial poems and feminist manifestations are not a common feature of her poetry, by emphasising the loss of freedom experienced by some women in getting married, Lescailje implicitly represents herself as an independent woman. She flaunts the fact that she has all the time in the world to write and to run her company and she is happy with this. This particular implication gains strength in poems written for other women writers through the opposition of Lescailje and the

bride.⁵⁹ The anti-marriage discourse and the focus on the freedom of unmarried women enabled Lescailje to connect herself to other self-employed and independent women among whom she lived and worked.

In conclusion, the way in which Lescailje deals with the anti-marriage discourse is representative of the way in which she was able to appropriate other conventions of the genre. It can be traced back to literary traditions and connected to social contexts in which her womanhood plays an important role. Lescailje appropriates the genre of nuptial poetry by altering its conventions, while still taking into account the social and literary possibilities and restrictions. She does so in order to consolidate her own social position as a self-employed, writing woman. The poems helped her earn the money she needed to stay autonomous; they helped to secure her position in literary networks and functioned as a defence of her public activities. Lescailje's use of the genre of nuptial poetry is unique in comparison to other women writers. However, the case of Lescailje demonstrates the possibilities of self-representation for women, also within such a conventional genre as nuptial poetry. Conventions could be appropriated.

⁵⁹ Grabowsky proposed a similar interpretation in "Katharina Lescailje" 73–76.



Fig. 1. Nic. Verkolje, *Katharina Lescailje* (1693). Pencil in grey on black chalk, 23,6 × 16,3 cm. Teylers Museum Haarlem, Inv. nr. PP 780.

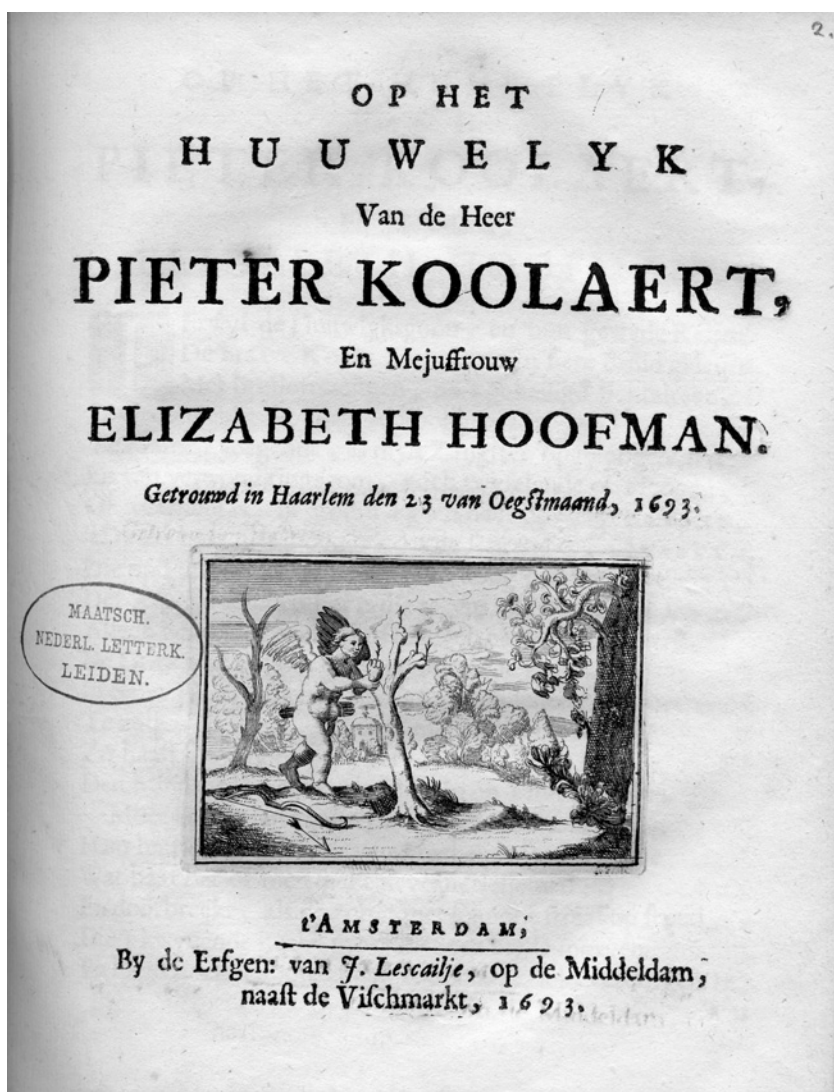


Fig. 2. Title page of Katharina Lescailje et al., *Op het huuwelyk van de heer Pieter Koolaert, en mejuffrouw Elizabeth Hooffman. Getrouwd in Haarlem, den 23 van Oegstmaand, 1693.* (Amsterdam, heirs of J. Lescailje: 1693). University Library Leiden, UBL 1099 H 18:2.



Te Amsteldam, by de Erfgen: van J. LESCAILJE en D. RANK, op de Beursstius.

BIBLIOTHECA
CONVENTUS
MEGENSIS.

Fig. 3. Title page of Katharina Lescailje, *Tooneel- en mengelpoëzy* (Amsterdam, heirs of J. Lescailje en D. Rank: 1731). University Library Utrecht, UBU
THO: MEG 10-250/251/252.



Fig. 4. *Klucht of Vernieuwende gedachtenis van de Púrgeerende Boontiens*, ca. 1680. Engraving, 35,3 × 39,4 cm. University Library Amsterdam (UvA), Special Collections P00015853. Satirical etching of the extravagant festivities Mennonites organised to celebrate marriages. The wedding guests are all running off to defecate after eating huge amounts of beans during the festivities.

APPENDICES

1. *Separate publications of nuptial poetry used for this article, in chronological order*⁶⁰

- VEER C. VAN DER – BORMANS S. – LESCAILJE K. – PLUYMER J. – ANGELKOT H. – CROIX P. DE LA – LEMMERS J. – BOSCHMAN P. – SOOLMANS J. – BOGAERT A. VAN DEN, *Huwelykszangen, Ter Bruilofte van de E. Bruidgom Matthias de Wreedt, en de E. Bruidt Barbera Lescailje. In d'Echt verbonden te Amsteldam, den 8/18 van Wintermaand, 1674* (no publisher, no date) [UBL 778 C 57:15].
- LESCAILJE K. – BAAKE L. – PLUIMER J. – BIDLOO G. – VERHOEK P. – CROIX P. DE LA – HOOGSTRATEN D. VAN, *Ter bruilofte van den heere Joannes Antonides van der Goes, der medicijnen doctor, en mejuffrouw Suzanna Bormans* (Rotterdam, Abraham van Waesberghe: 1678) [KB 853 A 224].
- LESCAILJE K. – BIDLOO G. – ELIAS M. – LINGELBACH D. – BOSCH S. – DITSOM C. VAN ADRIAENSZ. GEVELMAN M. – VERHOEK P. – GELEYN J. VAN – BAAKE L. – ARENDS T., *Op het huwelyk van den heer Harmannus Amya, en jonckvrouw Catharina de Vogelaar. Getrouwd in Amsterdam, den 19 van Wijnmaand 1683* (no publisher, no date) [UBL Portef. 24:5x].
- LESCAILJE K. – ARENIUS P. – JANSSEN A. – RABUS P. – HOOGSTRATEN J. VAN – BRACHT K. VAN – VRIES A. DE, *Parnaskranssen gevlogten op het huwelyk van den heere David van Hoogstraten, der medicinen doctor, en mejuffrouw Maria van Nispen. Voltrokken te Dordrecht den 28. Van Lentemaend 1685* (Dordrecht, Jan van Hoogstraten: 1685) [UBA OG 01–173].
- LESCAILJE K., *Op het Huwelyk Van de Heer Mr. Simon Muis van Holy, Heeren Arents zoon. En Jongvrouw Anna Elisabeth De Witt, Heeren CornelisDochter. Verëenigd in Dordrecht den 22. van Zommermaand, 1688* (no publisher, no date) [KB 489 A 9].
- JANSSEN A., *Huwelykslof. Ter bruilofte van Theodorus van Born, met Maria vanderSchuuren. [...]* (Amsterdam, Dirk Boeteman: 1690) [PBZ Gel. Ged. 133].
- LESCAILJE K. – HOOGSTRATEN D. VAN – PLUIMER J. – ANGELKOT H. – STORM J. – BÓGAERT A., *Op het huwelyk van de heer Pieter Koolaert, en mejuffrouw Elizabeth Hoofman. Getrouwd in Haarlem, den 23 van Oegstmaand, 1693* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1693) [UBL 1099 H 18:2].
- LESCAILJE K., *Ter bruilofte van de Heer Antoni Rutgers, en mejuffrouw Maria Rutgers. Getrouwd den darden van Louwemaand, 1694* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1694) [UBA OG 80 145:40].
- LESCAILJE K., *Harderszang ter bruilofte van den heere Jacob Alewynz Ghyzen, en jonckvrouw Juliana van der Schelling. Getrouwd den 10 van Grasmaand, 1695* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. van J. Lescailje: 1695) [UBA OG 80–245:54].
- BÓGAERT A., *Ter bruilofte van den heere Jan Teyler Jacobsz. en Maria van Gelyn. Door den echten band verknocht den 12 van Wiedemaand 1695* (Amsterdam, Herman Aaltsz: 1695) [UBA OG 80–245:59].
- JANSSEN, A., *Ter bruilofte van Joan Teiler Jakobsz. met Maria van Gelein. Getrouwdten 12den van Zommermaand, des jaar 1695. Binnen Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, Dirk Boeteman: 1695) [UBA OG 80–245:61].

⁶⁰ I used all the separate publications with poems by Lescailje, complemented by some publications by other authors on the same occasions. I was not able to consult one publication mentioned in the STCN (Short Title Catalogue of the Netherlands) because it seems to be lost: *Op het huwelyk van [...] Abraham Verhamme en [...] Katharina de Neufville [...]* (Amsterdam: Erfgen. J. Lescailje 1700). [UBA OG 65–169:1].

- N.N. [LESCAILJE K.], *Ter bruilofte van den heere Joan Teyler en jongkrouwe Maria van Geleyn. Getrouwd den 12 van Zomermaand* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1695) [UBA OG 80-245:60].
- LESCAILJE K. – ARENDZS. T. – BOUCART A. – ‘ALLES IN ’T WELNEMEN’, *Op het huuwelyk van den heer David Amoury, en jongkrouwe Maria van Lennepe. Getrouwd den xi van Wintermaand, 1695* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1695) [UBA 80-245:72].
- LESCAILJE K., *Ter bruilofte van den heere David Rutgers Isaakz, en Jongkrouwe Debora Bruin. Getrouwd den 3 van Sprokkelmaand, 1697* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1697) [UBA OG 80-254:95].
- JANSEN A., *Ter bruilofte van den heere David Rutgers Isaakszoon, met Debora Bruin. Getrouwt op den 3den van Sprokkelmaand des jaars 1697 in Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, Dirk Boeteman: 1697) [UBA OG 80-245:93].
- ANONYMOUS, *De Bruylot van monsr. David Rutgers Izaaks, en mejuffr. Dieuwertje Bruyn, gehouden, den 3 February, Binnen Amsteldam* (no place, no date) [UBA OG 80-245:94].
- LESCAILJE K. – FORTGENS G. – GYSEN A. VAN, *Op het huuwelyk van den heer Joannes vander Mersch, en jongkrouwe Petronella van Oosterwyk, getrouwd den xxii. van Herfstmaand, 1697* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1697) [UBL 1118 A 6:159].
- LESCAILJE K., *Ter bruilofte van den heere Jacob Feitama, en jonkrouwe Sara van Lennepe. Getrouwd den 5 van Louwemaand, 1698* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1698) [UBA OG 80-244:1].
- LESCAILJE K. – ARENDZS. T. – BÓGAERT A. – KAARSGIETER F. DE, *Op het huuwelyk van den heer Gerard Reessen, en jongkrouwe Geertruid van der Keere. Getrouwd den viii. van Zomermaand, 1698* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1698) [KB Gel.ged. 397].
- LESCAILJE K., *Ter bruilofte van den heere Abraham Hoorens, en mejuffrouw Catharina Linnich. Getrouwd den 21 van Zomermaand, 1699* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. Lescailje: 1699) [KB 853 A 250].
- LESCAILJE K. – REGT J. DE – G.F. [GERRIT FORTGENS] – A.B. – P.S., *Ter bruilofte van den heere Daniël Hoorens Cornelisz, en jongkrouwe Margareta Block. Getrouwd den 8sten van Oogstmaand, 1700* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1700) [KB 853 A 251].
- LESCAILJE K. – BIDLOO L., *Huuwelykx-wensch aan den E. Dionys Oortman, en jonkrouwe Maria Noorddyk. In den eften-staat getreden den 24 van Grasmaand, 1703* (no place, no date) [KB 853 B 2].
- LESCAILJE K., *Op het huuwelyk van den heere Abraham Verhamme, de jonge, en jongkrouwe Johanna Maria Slachregen, getrouwd in Haarlem, den 27sten van Herfstmaand, 1705* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1705) [KB 853 G 169:1].
- ANONYMOUS, *Bruyds en huwelyks lof. Op het trouwverbond van den heere Abraham Verhamme, en mejuffrouw Johanna Maria Slagreen. In den egt bevestigt den 27sten van Herfstmaand, in den jaare 1705. Binnen Haerlem* (no place, no date) [KB 853 G 169:2].
- LESCAILJE K. – FORTGENS G. – BOUMAN H. – BURG H. VAN DE, *Op het huuwelyk van den heere David Leeuw van Lennepe, en jongkrouwe Christina Rutgers; getrouwd den 28sten van Sprokkelmaand, 1706* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje, 1706) [UBA OG 01-300].
- LESCAILJE K. – STORM J. – BOON C. – HOEVEN V.V. – BURG H. VAN DEN, *Ter bruilofte van den heere Isaac Sney den jongen, en mejuffrouw Cornelia Slagreen. Getrouwd den 4den van Grasmaand, 1706* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje, 1706) [KB Gel. Ged. 400].
- G.V.H. – LESCAILJE K. – FORTGENS G. – BURG H. VAN DEN – SMIDS L. – VINCENT Y. – J.B.W., *Op het huuwelyk van den heere Jacob van Lennepe, en jongkrouwe Susanna Rutgers. Getrouwd den 6den van Bloemaand, 1706* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1706) [KB 853 C 141].
- LESCAILJE K. – J.J.O. – L.C. – BURG H. VAN DEN, *Op het huuwelyk van den heere Jan Hondius, en mejuffrouw Elizabeth Visscher, getrouwd den 18den van slachmaand, 1706* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1706) [KB Gel. Ged. 189].
- LESCAILJE K. – A.W. – SCHERMER L. – ANONYMOUS, *Op het huuwelyk van den heere Michiel Blok, en jongkrouwe Maria van Beeck; getrouwd den 6den van Lentemaand, 1707* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1707) [KB 853 A 279].

- G.V.H. – LESCAILJE K. – ROETERS J. – EEKE C. VAN – FORTGENS G. – BOUMAN H. – H.V.B. – W.S. – HOEVEN W. VAN DER, *Op het huwelyk van den heere Joen van Meekeren, en jongkrouw Margaretha Rutgers. Getrouwd den 17den van Grasmaand, 1707* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1707) [KB 852 F 410].
- LESCAILJE K. – RUTGERS D., *Ter bruilofte van den heere David Matheus de Neufville, en jongkrouw Jacoba van Gelder, Getrouwd den 18den van Grasmaand, 1708* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1708) [KB Gel. ged. 295].
- LESCAILJE K. – VOORDAAGH J. – J.V. – BRUIN C. – HOUBAKKER J. – GAETE H. VAN DEN, *Op het huwelyk van den heere Jacob Hennebo Adriaansz., en jongkrouw Magdalena Barnaard; getrouwd, in Haarlem, den 13den van Bloemaand, 1708* (Amsterdam, Erfgen. J. Lescailje: 1708) [KB 853 A 288].

2. Nuptial poetry by women (other than Lescailje)

- BETHS N.D., in: *Huwelyks-wensch, aan den Eerwaarden Jong-man Antonius ten Cate, en de Eerbare Jonge Dogter Margareta Bronkhorst* (Amsterdam, Wed. P. Arentsz: 1691) [UBA OG 80–245:14].
- BETHS N.D., in: *Huwelyks wensch an d'eersamen Jongman Herman ten Cate, de Jonge, en d'eerbare Jonge dogter Jozina Bronkhorst* (Amsterdam, Dirk Boeteman: 1691) [UBA OG 80–245:17].
- BORMANS S., in: *Huwelykszangen, Ter Bruilofte van de E. Bruidgom Matthias de Wreedt, en de E. Bruidt Barbera Lescailje. In d'Echt verbonden te Amsteldam, Den 8/18 van Wintermaand, 1674* (no place, no date) [UBL 778 C 57:15].
- BRUIN F. DE, in: *Huwelyks-toorts ontsteken ter bruilof van [...] Johannes d'Outrein [...] en [...] Geertruida Sluiter* (no place: 1689) [PBZ Gel. ged. 17].
- KATE N. TEN, *Houwelyxwensch, aan Dirk ten Cate, Dokter der Geneeskunst. Met Joanna Kist* (Amsterdam, Dirk Boeteman: 1696) [UBL 1197 B 31:18].
- KOPYN S., in: *Echtzangen, ter bruilof van den heere, Willem van Oosterwyk, en jonkvrouwe Susanna van Mollem* (Amsterdam, Francois Halma: 1706) [UBA OG 80–244:44].
- INSMa BRUYN A., *Wel lievens lof. Ter bruylofte van Siewert Centen, met Johanna Bruyn* (Amsterdam, no publisher: 1695) [UBA OG 80–245:69].
- MAZEIK P. VAN, in: *Ter bruilofte van Abraham vander Meersch junior, met Katarina Outerloo* (Amsterdam, Dirk Boeteman: 1696) [UBL 1197 B 31:19].
- MEERSCH, K. VAN, in: *Ter bruilofte van Abraham vander Meersch junior, met Katarina Outerloo* (Amsterdam, Dirk Boeteman: 1696) [UBL 1197 B31:19].
- PAAUW A.M., *Zegewens-gezang, op 't vereenen van [...] Nicolás Mol [...] en [...] Johanna Alatheia de Mey* (Gouda, Johannes Endenburg: 1703) [OB Arnhem Kluis 817].
- PAAUW A.M., *Op het huwelyk van Monsr. Joannes Endenburg [...] en juffr. Alida Ooms* (no place: 1701) [UBL Portef 24:42].
- PAAUW A.M., *Op het trouw-verbond van den heer Daniël Bik [...] en juffrouw Anna Maria Donker van Oukoop* (Gouda, Johannes Endenburg: 1701) [UBL Portef 24:14].
- PAAUW A.M., *Op het egt-verbond van de Hoog-Agtbaaren Heer de Heer en Mr. Gerard van Brandwijk [...] en Mevrouw Agatha vander Burg.* (Gouda, Joannes Endenburg: 1700) [UBL Portef 24:23].
- PAAUW A.M., in: *Heil en Zegen-wens op 't Huwelyk van sr. Joannes Terwe, [...] en [...] Christina Antwerpen* (Gouda, Johannes Endenburg: 1699) [KB 853 A 253:1].
- PAAUW A.M., in: *Op het huwelyk van den Hoog agtbaaren Heer mijn Heer Frederyk Dumant [...] ende Wel edele Juffrouw Me Juffrouw, Maria van Bleiswyk* (Schiedam, Laurens van der Wiel: 1699) [UBL Portef 24:39].
- PAAUW A.M., in: *Op 't Huwelyk van [...] Reyer vander Burch en [...] Agatha vander Burch* (Gouda, Wed. Andries Endenburg: 1694) [KB Gel. ged. 5].
- VEER C. VAN DER, in: *Huwelykszangen, Ter Bruilofte van de E. Bruidgom Matthias de Wreedt, en de E. Bruidt Barbera Lescailje. In d'Echt verbonden te Amsteldam, den 8/18 van Wintermaand, 1674* (no place, no date) [UBL 778 C 57:15].

- VEER C. VAN DER, in: *Houlyx wenschen: Voor de heer Willem Tierens, en de volgeestige juffer Alida Schouten* (Amsterdam, Paulus Matthysz.: 1676) [UBL: Portef qu 7: 47].
- WITH H.E. DE, in: *Bruiloftzangen op het huwelyk van den hoogwelgeboren heer Eger Tamminga [...] en de hoogwelgebore jongvrouwe Izabella Sofia van der Muelen tot Maersbergen, enz. enz.* (no place: 1718) [UBL: 186 A 4:36].
- WITH H.E. DE, in: *Huwelykszangen ter bruilofte van de heere Tiberius Beeldsnyder Matroos, der beide Rechten Dokter, en jongvrouwe Alida Margareta Meyn.* (Amsterdam, Johannes Oosterwyk: 1718) [UBA: OG: 01–154].
- WITH K.J. DE, in: *Ter bruiloft van den heere Dirk van Poolsum, en juffrouw Anna Maria van Engelen* (Utrecht, Jacob van Poolsum: 1717) [UBL 1197 B 32:16].
- WITH K.J. DE, *Herdersgezang ter eeren van [...] Petrus Vuyt [...] ende Barbara Wilhelma Gerlings* (Utrecht, Wed. G. Muntendam: 1714) [KB Gel. ged. 732].

Selective Bibliography

- BLEVINS J., *Catullan Consciousness and the Early Modern Lyric in England* (Burlington: 2004).
- BOUMAN J., *Nederlandse gelegenheidsgedichten voor 1700 in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te 's-Gravenhage: Catalogus van gedrukte gedichten op gedenkwaardige gebeurtenissen in het leven van particuliere personen*, Bibliotheca Bibliographica Neerlandica 15 (The Hague: 1982).
- CARLIN C.L., "Imagining Marriage in the 1690s", *Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature* 28, 54 (2001) 167–176.
- DAAMEN M. – MEIJER A., *Catalogus van gedrukte Nederlandse gelegenheidsgedichten uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw in de Zeeuwse Bibliotheek te Middelburg* (Middelburg: 1990).
- DUBROW H., *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* (Ithaca: 1990).
- GEMERT L. VAN, "Katharina Lescailje (Amsterdam, 26 september 1649–Amsterdam, 8 juni 1711). Schrijfster annex uitgeefster", in Schenkeveld-van der Dussen R. – Porteman K. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans: Schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850. Van Anna Bijns tot Elise van Calcar* (Amsterdam: 1997) 396–402.
- , "Hiding Behind Words? Lesbianism in 17th-Century Dutch Poetry", *Thamyris: Mythmaking from Past to Present* 2, 1 (1995) 11–44.
- , "De vrouwenzucht van Katharina Lescailje", in Gelderblom A.J. – Duits H. – Smits-Veldt M.B. (eds.), *Klinkend boek: studies over renaissance-sonnetten voor Marijke Spies* (Hilversum: 1994) 143–149.
- GRABOWSKY E., "Katharina Lescailje (1649–1711) en de 'vrouwenzucht': schijn of werkelijkheid?", *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman* 23, 2 (2000) 65–79.
- JEU A. DE, *'t Spoor der dichtersessen'. Netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van schrijvende vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: 2000).
- LESCAILJE KATHARINA., *Tooneel- en mengelpoëzy*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, Erfgen. Lescailje en Dirk Rank: 1731).
- , "Huwelijkszangen", in: Lescailje, *Tooneel- en mengelpoëzy* II, 3–314.
- MILLER N.K., "Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing and the Reader", in Burke S. (ed.), *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader* (Edinburgh: 2000) 193–211.
- NEUWEBOER A., "Haarlems literair leven in gelegenheidsgedichten (1680–1770)", in Grootes E.K. (ed.), *Haarlems helicon. Literatuur en toneel te Haarlem vóór 1800*, (Hilversum: 1993) 187–201.
- SCHENKEVELD-VAN DER DUSSEN M.A., "Poëzie als gebruiksartikel: gelegenheidsgedichten in de zeventiende eeuw", in Spies M. (ed.), *Historische letterkunde: facetten van vakbeoefening* (Groningen: 1984) 75–92.
- , "Hochzeitsdichtung und christlicher Glaube. Einige Epithalamien Niederländischer Dichter", *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik* A, 8 (1980) 31–37.
- , "Christus, Hymenaeus of de 'Teelzucht'", in Witstein S.F. – Grootes E.K. (eds.), *Vieses op Vondel na honderd jaar. Een bundel artikelen ter gelegenheid van de driehonderdste sterfdag van Joost van den Vondel* (The Hague: 1979) 11–25.
- , "Theorie en poëzie: een epithalamium van Six van Chandelier", *De nieuwe taalgids* 72 (1979) 391–398.
- , "Bruilofts- en liefdeslyriek in de 18e eeuw: de rol van de literaire conventies", *De nieuwe taalgids* 67 (1974) 449–461.
- SCHENKEVELD-VAN DER DUSSEN R. – PORTEMAN K. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans: Schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850. Van Anna Bijns tot Elise van Calcar* (Amsterdam: 1997).
- SPIES M., "Betaald werk? Poëzie als ambacht in de 17e eeuw", *Holland. Themanummer Kunst in opdracht in de Gouden Eeuw* 23 (1991) 210–224.

TUFTE V., *The Poetry of Marriage. The Epithalamium in Europe and Its Development in England* (Los Angeles: 1970).

VISSER P., "Aspects of Social Criticism and Cultural Assimilation: The Mennonite Image in Literature and Self-Criticism of Literary Mennonites", in Hamilton A. – Voolstra S. – Visser P. (eds.), *From Martyr to Muppy. A Historical Introduction to Cultural Assimilation Processes of a Religious Minority in the Netherlands: the Mennonites* (Amsterdam: 1994) 67–82.

MADAME DE MAINTENON AU MIROIR DE SA CORRESPONDANCE: RÉHABILITATION DU PERSONNAGE ET REDÉCOUVERTE D'UNE ÉCRITURE FÉMININE

Christine Mongenot et Hans Bots

‘...le Roi est courageux et chrétien et pour moi,
Madame, je suis femme et des plus faibles’
(Lettre du 5 juin 1706, à Madame de La Trémoille,
princesse Des Ursins)

Toute évaluation sérieuse d’une pratique scripturale, féminine ou masculine, qu’elle relève de l’épistolaire ou d’autres genres, implique le recours à des sources de première main. Toute interprétation historique de ces écrits suppose aussi la prise en compte de l’ensemble d’un corpus, avec ses variations si l’on veut éviter d’en gauchir l’interprétation. Dans le cas de Madame de Maintenon, ces deux conditions n’ont, jusqu’ici, guère été réunies puisque l’historien comme le chercheur en littérature ne disposaient d’aucune édition critique intégrale de ses lettres. Les éditions des siècles antérieurs, malgré leurs lacunes et leur partialité – ou peut-être à cause de cela – ont nourri une historiographie qui n’a cessé de reconduire à propos de Madame de Maintenon, l’imagerie d’une orgueilleuse intrigante ou d’une dévote hypocrite, frôlant la bigoterie. Ces légendes tenaces, voire ces mythologies également renforcées par le topos négatif de la femme d’influence, ont eu la vie dure. Elles ont été largement alimentées par des citations ponctuelles de ses écrits, par l’appel à des textes quantitativement marginaux dans l’ensemble de la correspondance ou même par le recours à des textes apocryphes dont le principal mérite était précisément de fournir des éléments convergents avec l’image négative à construire.

Sous peu une nouvelle édition – critique celle fois-ci – paraîtra aux Editions Champion.¹ Elle va permettre l’accès aux sources intégrales et

¹ La nouvelle édition intégrale des *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon* par une équipe franco-néerlandaise paraîtra chez H. Champion en 7 volumes de 2009 à 2012. Le premier volume, édité par Hans Bots et Eugénie Bots-Estourgie, avec une préface de Marc Fumaroli et une introduction de Hans Bots et Christine Mongenot, contient les lettres qu’elle écrivit entre 1650 et 1689. Le second volume, paru en 2010, contient les lettres de 1690–1706.

présenter la correspondance sous sa forme authentique. Ce renouvellement des sources devrait engager une révision large de l'historiographie concernant Madame de Maintenon; il ouvre aussi un nouveau champ d'étude littéraire autour d'une épistolière longtemps occultée au profit de son éminente et brillante contemporaine Madame de Sévigné.

Retour sur quelques données biographiques

La personnalité complexe de Madame de Maintenon, ses aspects souvent contradictoires, suscitaient déjà chez ses contemporains des interprétations diamétralement opposées de son personnage: femme de cœur vouée à l'élévation du grand Roi pour ses thuriféraires – les dames de Saint-Cyr ou le cercle des amies à la Cour par exemple,² – elle n'est pour la princesse Palatine ou pour les auteurs de pamphlets que la 'vieille ripopée'.

L'indétermination du personnage, voire son opacité ont aussi suscité les interrogations des historiens et des biographes:³ qui était en réalité cette femme sans doute orgueilleuse quoique dévote, devenue maîtresse du Roi sous le couvert d'assurer le salut du souverain? Quels étaient les apports ou les limites de son action auprès du Roi? Comment résoudre la contradiction entre la défense d'un modèle de vie féminine dévote, impliquant à la fois la maîtrise de soi mais aussi une forme d'autodétermination et le statut ambigu d'épouse morgantique, qui condamne celle qui l'accepte à subir toutes les contraintes de ce nouvel état? Quelles conclusions, enfin, tirer d'un comportement surprenant et opportuniste, guidé par le souci de sauvegarder sa place dans une Cour où l'esprit et la galanterie manquent entièrement, mais où 'on joue, on baille, on s'ennuie, on ramasse quelque misère les uns des autres, on se hait, on s'envie, on se déchire?'⁴

² Citons ici notamment Madame de Montchevreuil, la duchesse de Noailles, Madame de Dangeau et Madame de Ventadour.

³ Voir l'introduction au tome I des *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon* (Paris: 2009) le paragraphe: "Images contrastées dans l'historiographie". Nous renvoyons ici aux biographies les plus remarquables: Cordelier J., *Madame de Maintenon* (Paris: 1955) et plus récemment. Bertière S., *Les Reines de France au temps des Bourbon/ 2: Les femmes du Roi-Soleil* (Paris: 1998), et Desprat J., *Madame de Maintenon (1635-1719) ou le prix de la réputation* (Paris: 2003). Nous avons utilisé notamment ces trois ouvrages pour la partie biographique de cette contribution.

⁴ Lettre du 17 juillet [1705], à Madame de Caylus. Pour les lettres écrites après 1689 nous ne donnons que les dates.

Cette réception contrastée semble presque inscrite dans une vie marquée, dès l'origine, par de nombreuses oscillations sur le plan familial, religieux et affectif. Petite-fille du poète et historien humaniste Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, la petite Françoise, née à Niort en 1635, sera élevée dès l'âge de trois ans au château de Mursay. Son oncle Benjamin Le Valois de Villette et sa tante Arthémise d'Aubigné lui donnent une éducation calviniste. Cependant, en décembre 1643, la fillette est reprise par sa mère, parce que la famille d'Aubigné va chercher fortune dans les Antilles. L'aventure antillaise est de courte durée: début juillet 1647, Madame d'Aubigné et ses trois enfants quittent la Martinique pour regagner la France. Pendant quelques mois, la jeune Françoise retrouve sa famille au château de Mursay, mais après la mort de son père, elle est placée sous la tutelle d'une tante, qui reprend la garde de la jeune fille. Pour contrecarrer le penchant de la jeune Françoise pour le calvinisme, cette tutrice l'envoie tout d'abord chez les Ursulines à Niort en 1649, puis la reprend rapidement sous sa tutelle directe et la traite alors avec beaucoup de dureté.

Un voyage à Paris, en septembre 1650, et un bref séjour chez les Ursulines de la rue Saint-Jacques, visent à parachever ce travail de conversion. Cependant, le séjour parisien pendant l'hiver 1650-1651, est aussi l'occasion d'entrer en contact avec quelques représentants de la bonne société à la ville et quelques auteurs reconnus, tels que Ménage, Méré, Benserade et Scarron. La rencontre avec ce dernier est décisive pour son avenir. Presque dès la première rencontre la jeune Françoise suscite l'intérêt du poète paralysé et atteint de rhumatisme qui ne tarde pas à lui écrire, malgré la grande différence d'âge entre lui et la jeune fille. Celle-ci, sachant que sa fortune ne lui laisse guère de marge et que le couvent sera son sort inévitable, consent avec beaucoup de lucidité au mariage avec cet homme malade. Le contrat est signé début 1652 et la cérémonie célébrée le 4 avril de cette même année. Il n'est pas exclus que la jeune Françoise ait anticipé qu'elle ne resterait pas très longtemps soumise à cet homme maladif et qu'en épousant Scarron, celui-ci lui permettrait de participer à la sociabilité des années 1650, de quitter sa province et de voir le monde littéraire de son temps, dans les différentes assemblées galantes et précieuses de Paris. Associée aux réunions du cercle autour de Scarron, elle fréquentera aussi les hôtels de Richelieu et d'Albret, la ruelle de Mademoiselle de Scudéry et celle de Ninon de l'Enclos ou bien encore l'hôtel de Rambouillet de Julie d'Angennes, duchesse de Montausier. On trouvera dans de nombreuses lettres, lorsque la correspondance

n'est pas seulement factuelle, des traces de ces contacts fructueux et l'art épistolaire de Madame de Maintenon gardera la 'teinture'⁵ de l'esprit raffiné à la fois pratiqué et valorisé dans les cercles précieux et plus largement 'galants'.

Le 7 octobre 1660, Scarron meurt et Françoise est alors une jeune veuve de 25 ans, libre, mais sans aucune fortune. S'étant retirée dans le couvent des Hospitalières à la Place Royale, elle ne cesse pas pour autant de fréquenter les cercles mondains et littéraires de son temps. C'est dans cette période incertaine, et où interviennent probablement quelques tentations galantes, que, soucieuse de sa réputation, elle choisit définitivement 'le camp de la vertu', comme le dit Jean Desprat, gardant ainsi la maîtrise de ses sentiments et de sa liberté.⁶ À la fin de l'année 1661 elle rencontre Françoise-Athénaïs de Mortemart, épouse du marquis de Montespan. Cette rencontre avec Madame de Montespan qui vient d'être nommée fille d'honneur de la Reine va constituer un nouveau tournant dans la vie de Madame Scarron. La maîtresse de Louis XIV, charge en effet la jeune veuve de l'éducation des enfants nés de sa liaison avec le Roi. Au cours des années suivantes, Madame Scarron élèvera cinq enfants naturels de Louis XIV, qui seront tous légitimés en 1673. Le Roi qui a été sans doute très content des talents pédagogiques de Madame Scarron, n'est pas non plus resté longtemps aveugle à ses charmes. A partir de mars 1673, il multipliera par trois sa pension et en 1674 il lui accordera encore de substantielles gratifications, grâce auxquelles elle achètera le domaine et le château de Maintenon. Le titre de marquise de Maintenon couronne cette première phase d'ascension sociale.

Installée à la Cour de Versailles depuis janvier 1674, la gouvernante des enfants royaux va désormais conduire, avec habileté et grâce, un jeu qui mêle séduction et résistance vis-à-vis du Roi. Sa nomination comme seconde Dame d'atours de la Dauphine, en mars 1680, consacre sa victoire sur la favorite officielle et met fin à sa dépendance

⁵ C'est le terme qu'emploiera Saint-Simon pour caractériser les traces durables de cette culture lorsqu'il déclare: 'son beau temps [...] avait été celui des belles conversations, de la belle galanterie, en un mot de ce qu'on appelait les ruelles, [et] lui en avait tellement donné l'esprit qu'elle en retint toujours le goût et la plus forte teinture'.

⁶ Desprat, *Madame de Maintenon* 116–117 et l'entretien avec Madame de Glapion dans: Lavallée Th., *Lettres Historiques et édifiantes adressées aux Dames de Saint-Louis* (Paris: 1856), II 22: 'Je ne voulais point être aimée en particulier de qui que ce soit, je voulais l'être de tout le monde, faire dire du bien de moi, faire un beau personnage et avoir l'approbation des honnêtes gens, c'était là mon idole'.

vis-à-vis de Madame de Montespan: la rupture entre les deux femmes est définitive. La réussite de Madame de Maintenon n'est toutefois que partielle; originaire de la petite noblesse de province, elle est, dès sa nomination à ce poste prestigieux qui a toujours été réservé à la plus haute noblesse, considérée comme une intruse et elle subira dès lors l'hostilité de son entourage. Mais elle sait y faire face et son étoile monte si haut que Madame de Sévigné écrit à sa fille, en septembre 1680:

Je ne sais auquel des courtisans la langue a fourché le premier; ils appellent tout bas Madame de Maintenon, *Madame de Maintenant* [...]. Cette dame de Maintenon ou de Maintenant passe tous les soirs depuis huit jusqu'à dix avec sa Majesté.⁷

C'est encore Madame de Sévigné qui affirme dans une de ses lettres, en évoquant le Roi, que Madame de Maintenon lui a fait connaître un 'pays nouveau', à savoir 'le commerce de l'amitié et de la conversation sans contrainte et sans chicane'.⁸

Fait surprenant, cette grande faveur de Madame de Maintenon coïncide avec le retour du Roi vers son épouse, Marie-Thérèse. En effet, Bossuet et son directeur de conscience vont se servir d'elle pour ramener le Roi à une vie plus conforme à la morale chrétienne et plus susceptible d'assurer son salut. Il est certain que le chemin n'a pas été commode et on comprend bien la lutte intérieure de celle qui est devenue la maîtresse du Roi, lorsqu'elle s'ouvre à Madame de Brinon, le 20 avril 1683: 'Il est vrai que je fis mes Pâques jeudi, après une nuit pleine de trouble et de beaucoup de larmes, mais je ne sais que trop qu'elles ne peuvent être précieuses'.⁹ Trois mois plus tard, la mort subite de la Reine, le 30 juillet, fait tout basculer et risque d'ouvrir un avenir plein d'incertitude pour Madame de Maintenon, surtout si Louis XIV se remarie. Mais dès le début de septembre 1683, la décision d'un mariage morganatique semble avoir été prise: l'union sera célébrée du 9 au 10 octobre, deux mois à peine après la mort de la

⁷ Madame de Sévigné, *Correspondance*, éd. R. Duchêne (Paris: 1974-1978), III 16-17: lettre du 18 septembre 1680, à Madame de Grignan.

⁸ Madame de Sévigné, *Correspondance*, II 1016, lettre du 17 juillet 1680, à Madame de Grignan.

⁹ *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon*, I 310, lettre du 20 avril 1683. L'amour qu'elle éprouve pour le Roi lui apporte des troubles dans sa conscience. Cette phrase est un des rares endroits dans sa correspondance et ses autres écrits où elle exprime quelque remords sur la vie qu'elle mène à la Cour.

Reine, comme si le souci de se conformer aux règles de l'Église avait écarté le respect des convenances.¹⁰

Une fois parvenue à ses fins, Madame de Maintenon découvre presque immédiatement que sa nouvelle vie à l'ombre du Roi, qui s'étendra sur 32 années, ne sera qu'une longue marche pleine de désillusions, même si elle lui laisse quelques rares espaces pour exercer sa vocation d'éducatrice ou entretenir des relations plus intimes avec certaines personnes de confiance, telles que des prélats et surtout des dames parmi lesquelles des femmes comme Madame de Caylus, Madame de Dangeau ou la princesse des Ursins. Elle réussit à construire avec elles une véritable 'conformité de sentiments'.¹¹

La vie de Madame de Maintenon se confond désormais avec celle du Roi vieillissant, qu'elle accompagne jusqu'à sa mort en 1715. Son statut toujours aussi précaire malgré la faveur royale affichée, et l'hostilité jamais désarmée de l'entourage du Roi, à quelques exceptions près, lui font craindre d'éventuelles mesures de rétorsion et la convainquent de quitter précipitamment la Cour dès que la mort du Roi s'annonce. La retraite à Saint-Cyr sera définitive: elle durera encore quatre ans, pendant lesquels Madame de Maintenon rompra peu à peu les derniers liens qui la rattachent au monde, se consacrant exclusivement à l'institution éducative féminine qui a été sa grande oeuvre.

Réévaluer le personnage

L'image négative de Madame de Maintenon transmise par Saint-Simon et renforcée par Michelet perdure dans l'historiographie française, surtout chez les auteurs qui ne se réfèrent pas eux-mêmes aux écrits de la marquise, notamment à sa correspondance. Son premier biographe et premier éditeur de la correspondance, Laurent Angliviel de La Beaumelle, est involontairement – sans doute – à l'origine de ce gauchissement. Chez d'autres éditeurs la réception s'infléchira aussi d'une autre manière, prenant un tour nettement hagiographique –

¹⁰ Voir Bertière, *Les Reines de France* 331.

¹¹ Voir pour la correspondance de Madame de Maintenon avec Madame de Caylus et Madame de Dangeau *L'estime et la tendresse. Correspondances intimes*, ed. Leroy P.-E. – Loyau M. (Paris: 1998) notamment page 30. Pour les lettres de Madame des Ursins, voir aussi Bossanges frères, *Lettres inédites de Madame de Maintenon et de Madame la princesse des Ursins* (Paris: 1826), 4 vols. et plus récemment. Loyau M., *Correspondance de Madame de Maintenon et de la princesse des Ursins* (Paris: 2002).

Th. Lavallée au XIX^e siècle –, ou à l'inverse s'affirmant assez systématiquement critique, ce qui est le cas pour Marcel Langlois au XX^e siècle. Toutes ces éditions sont cependant loin d'être complètes et sont restées inachevées.

En tant qu'éditeur des lettres de Madame de Maintenon, La Beaumelle s'est permis beaucoup de libertés et certaines lettres procurées par lui doivent être considérées comme entièrement apocryphes. Or ce sont précisément ces textes peu fiables, et d'un style bien différent de celui de l'épistolière, qui ont servi de base à l'historiographie ultérieure, jusqu'au XX^e siècle. Ce sont elles qui ont nourri la mythologie sur Madame de Maintenon.

Tel est le cas sur le plan politico-religieux surtout. Les lettres à Madame de Saint-Géran publiées par La Beaumelle sont à coup sûr fausses; ce sont toutefois ces lettres-là qui ont beaucoup contribué à la légende selon laquelle Madame de Maintenon aurait inspiré au Roi sa décision de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes. Un an avant cet événement on lit déjà dans une desdites lettres, fournie par La Beaumelle:

Le Roi est prêt à faire tout ce qui sera jugé le plus utile au bien de la religion. Cette entreprise le couvrira de gloire devant Dieu et devant les hommes, il aura fait rentrer tous ses sujets dans le sein de l'Église et il aura détruit l'hérésie que tous ses prédécesseurs n'ont pu vaincre.¹²

Une semaine après la Révocation, Madame de Maintenon se serait encore réjouie dans une missive à Madame de Saint-Géran du 'grand ouvrage [du Roi] de la réunion des hérétiques à l'Église'.¹³

Que révèle en fait la lecture attentive des lettres *authentiques*, éditées à partir des manuscrits fiables? Elle permet de nuancer tout d'abord la thèse de l'influence sur les décisions politiques d'un Roi qui n'aime pas à être régi, même par son épouse, et qui a toujours pris seul ses décisions. Sans responsabilité directe dans la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes, l'épouse morganatique joue tout au plus le rôle d'une bonne conseillère, qui lui dit la vérité sans le flatter et qui lui fait comprendre qu'il a aussi de mauvais conseillers.¹⁴ Les lettres authentiques révèlent plutôt sa modération et son souci du sort des Huguenots. Lors des dragonnades en Poitou, elle écrit même à son cousin protestant que 'l'on

¹² Lettre du 13 août 1684; nous publions cette lettre dans notre édition (*Lettres Maintenon*, I 374 A), parce qu'elle a joué un rôle important dans l'historiographie.

¹³ *Lettres Maintenon*, I 410A, lettre du 25 octobre 1685.

¹⁴ Lavallée, *Lettres historiques et édifiantes* II 368–369.

pousse trop loin l'aversion de votre religion'.¹⁵ Si dans certains domaines Madame de Maintenon a soumis au Roi ses propres jugements, qui n'ont pas toujours été dépourvus de partis pris ni d'erreurs de jugement,¹⁶ son attitude vis-à-vis des questions politiques, telle qu'on peut la reconstituer à partir de sa correspondance, est surtout régie par un double principe: modération et résignation. La responsabilité de la guerre de Succession d'Espagne imputée à Madame de Maintenon est aussi une hypothèse historique infondée: de nombreuses lettres attestent au contraire ses aspirations incontestables à la paix¹⁷ et montrent qu'elle n'a cessé, quoique vainement, d'inciter le Roi à commencer des négociations.¹⁸ Le thème de la paix tant souhaitée est aussi fréquemment évoqué dans ses lettres aux Dames et aux Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr et atteste de la constance et de la profondeur de cette aspiration.¹⁹ Seule cette nouvelle édition critique et intégrale de sa correspondance permet donc d'offrir un contrepoids à l'image négative et aux clichés véhiculés par une historiographie partielle et qui ne se fonde souvent que sur des sources de seconde main.²⁰

Éducatrice et Mère de l'Église

Les mêmes gauchissements historiographiques s'observent aussi lorsque l'on considère l'oeuvre éducative de Madame de Maintenon. Les

¹⁵ Lavallée, *Lettres historiques et édifiantes* I, lettre 369, lettre du 16 juillet 1684.

¹⁶ Bluche F., *Louis XIV* (Paris: 2007²) 709–715.

¹⁷ Voir par exemple sa lettre du 22 septembre 1691 à Madame de Loubert: 'Prions pour la paix, rien n'est si terrible que la guerre'; et celle du 27 août 1693 à Madame de Brinon: 'Je languis de la continuation de la guerre et je donnerais tout pour la paix. Le Roi la fera, dès qu'il le pourra et la veut aussi véritablement que nous, mais il fera, en attendant, une grande guerre [...]'. Voir aussi ses lettres de novembre 1700.

¹⁸ Chaline O., *Le règne de Louis XIV* (Paris: 2005) 94. Voir aussi pour son comportement pendant les délibérations au Conseil en novembre 1700, Loyau, *Correspondance* 43–44. On lit dans "Mémoires du marquis de Torcy", in Michaud M.M. – Poujoulat J. (éds.), *Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de France* (Paris: 1839) VIII 551, que Madame de Maintenon, contrairement à ce qui a été avancé à tort par certains auteurs, n'a point donné son avis dans le Conseil sur la question si l'on devait suivre le testament selon lequel le Roi d'Espagne rappelait ses héritiers naturels à sa succession.

¹⁹ Voir par exemple *Lettres Maintenon*, I lettres 263, 354, 359, 362 et 365.

²⁰ Tous les travaux de Dominique Picco et leur remarquable utilisation des sources matérielles de première main, ont fondamentalement modifié la perception de Saint-Cyr et l'ont arrachée aux mêmes lieux communs infondés (fermeture, immobilisme), mais d'autres pans historiques importants restent encore à explorer.

lettres aux Dames de Saint-Louis, aux différentes maîtresses de classes ou aux Demoiselles elles-mêmes, révèlent un pan considérable des activités de Madame de Maintenon pendant plus de trois décennies. Pourtant celles-ci ont tantôt été peu valorisées par une tradition historiographique plus à la recherche de faits exceptionnels que d'indices concernant la vie ordinaire, tantôt inscrites dans des représentations tranchées: dans un cas l'Institutrice de Saint-Cyr aurait très vite radicalement renoncé à appliquer quelques principes pédagogiques innovants, dans l'autre le modernisme de sa pédagogie est exagérément souligné. La lecture de la correspondance dans son intégralité restitue une image bien plus nuancée et plus complexe de ses conceptions éducatives. Elle permet aussi de saisir dans la durée – pendant plus de trente ans – l'importance de ses préoccupations quasi quotidiennes pour la fondation Royale et son souci de perfectionner la pédagogie d'un Institut qui réunit l'intérêt politique du monarque et sa propre vocation personnelle d'Institutrice.

Trois facteurs convergents ont en effet favorisé la naissance de l'institution: le premier est une donnée personnelle, sa propre expérience de jeune fille pauvre, livrée aux aléas d'une vie difficile; le second est le contexte général de la contre-réforme qui a vu se multiplier les congrégations enseignantes et se développer plus particulièrement l'intérêt pour l'instruction féminine.²¹ Enfin se greffe un troisième facteur, la volonté royale de donner à la noblesse qui a tant souffert de son expansionnisme quelques compensations matérielles.²² L'institution accueille donc 250 jeunes Demoiselles d'origine noble, élevées de 7 à 20 ans aux frais du Roi, et dotées à leur sortie, qu'elles soient mariées ou se consacrent à la vie religieuse. Le système éducatif saint-cyrien intègre d'ailleurs ce double objectif dans une même perspective de formation chrétienne, en se référant à quelques principes novateurs: recherche d'une pédagogie active et pratique, mise en place d'un système d'enseignement mutuel, sans doute inspiré par les méthodes des Jésuites. Un autre élément novateur est la primauté accordée non à la mémoire, mais à la réflexion et au jugement, dans le prolongement direct des

²¹ Voir Cocâtre-Zilgien Ph. – Neveu B., "Saint-Cyr, Institut religieux et Fondation royale", *Revue de l'Histoire de Versailles et des Yvelines* 74 (1990) 29–31, qui attirent l'attention sur ces congrégations enseignantes.

²² Citons à ce titre la prise en charge des victimes de guerre avec la création de l'Hôtel des Invalides, l'accès à la formation pour les descendants de la noblesse, avec l'institution des cadets pour les garçons et celle de Saint-Cyr pour les filles.

principes également prônés par la *Ratio Studiorum* des Jésuites.²³ Dans cette perspective une pédagogie de l'oral est largement mise en place à Saint-Cyr: pratique des *Conversations*, mais aussi *Entretiens* collectifs ou individualisés.²⁴

Par ailleurs, la place accordée à l'écriture dans l'enseignement – graphie et orthographe – est tout à fait remarquable et traduit un souci très moderne en une période où l'écriture n'est pas encore considérée comme d'un véritable intérêt pour le commun des femmes. Pour prendre la juste mesure de ce modernisme ou le nuancer, et pour analyser ces différents aspects du système éducatif de Saint-Cyr, il est certain que les lettres de Madame de Maintenon adressées aux Dames de Saint-Louis et aux Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr constituent une source primordiale. En effet, elles sont extrêmement nombreuses et représentent un des cinq principaux réseaux de destinataires de correspondants. Cette abondance est précisément ce qui a conduit les éditeurs antérieurs à éliminer nombre de ces lettres en raison de leur caractère redondant, livrant ainsi une vision fragmentaire de la pensée éducative de Madame de Maintenon.

On objectera, pour justifier un intérêt si vif pour la fondation royale, que celle qui n'a jamais aimé la Cour de Versailles, trouve aussi là une chance de se créer un refuge? Cette aspiration se lit fréquemment dans ses lettres, lorsqu'elle crie son désir de retrouver ce lieu, dont elle veut faire 'l'école de la vertu',²⁵ et ce désir est profond et sincère. Pourtant, si Saint-Cyr est bien pour celle qui vit dans l'ombre du Roi, un moyen de 'repandre souffle'²⁶ et si elle y a trouvé son petit royaume, jusqu'à la fin de ses jours, sa correspondance prouve que le souci pédagogique prédomine largement sur le besoin d'un lieu de retraite personnelle.

²³ Voir: Rapley E., *Les dévotes. Les femmes et l'Église en France au XVII^e siècle* (Québec: 1995) 226–230.

²⁴ Nous renvoyons ici aux très nombreux travaux de Dominique Picco sur Saint-Cyr et en particulier à son article intitulé "Tourner doucement le premier usage de leur raison à connaître Dieu ou l'instruction religieuse des filles de bonnes maisons dans la France du XVII^e siècle", in Lopez D. – Mazouer C. – Suire E. (éds.), *La religion des élites au XVII^e siècle. Actes du Colloque du Centre de recherches sur le XVII^e siècle européen* (décembre 2006), Biblio 17, 175 (Tübingen: 2008) 37–52.

²⁵ Terme employé, à titre de souhait, dans plusieurs lettres: voir par exemple celle à Madame de Montalembert du 19 octobre 1703: 'Je souhaite de tout mon cœur qu'elle soit l'école de la vertu et qu'on y vive comme des anges, tandis que la corruption augmente tous les jours dans le monde'.

²⁶ Fumaroli, "Préface", Leroy P.-E. – Loyau M. (éds.), *Estime et Tendresse* ix.

En ce qui concerne la gestion des affaires ecclésiastiques en revanche, l'influence de Madame de Maintenon est très nette; ses lettres montrent qu'elle a été en quelque sorte une mère de l'Église qui correspondait avec des évêques et n'hésitait pas à intervenir directement dans leurs nominations lors des vacances de sièges et dans les affaires qui préoccupaient les membres du haut clergé. L'Église de France est inquiétée dans les années 1690 par la doctrine quiétiste, une nouvelle spiritualité vulgarisée par Madame Guyon et défendue par Fénelon. Il est certain que Madame de Maintenon a été pendant quelque temps charmée par cette doctrine qu'elle a accueillie avec trop de confiance à Saint-Cyr. Mais deux motifs vont rapidement la conduire à rompre tout contact avec Madame Guyon et à lui interdire de revenir à Saint-Cyr: son bon sens et son penchant pour le raisonnable ne supportent pas longtemps l'exaltation et les idées souvent floues de la spiritualité quiétiste; mais elle mesure par ailleurs la menace que représenterait pour sa propre situation le développement d'une doctrine que le Roi pourrait considérer comme une dangereuse hérésie.

L'affaire quiétiste à Saint-Cyr et les inquiétudes de Madame de Maintenon à son égard ont eu une incidence forte sur le sort de Fénelon au cours de ces mêmes années.²⁷ Comme Fénelon qui entretient une relation étroite avec Madame Guyon, est depuis 1689 le précepteur du duc de Bourgogne, le rapprochement avec Madame de Maintenon s'explique aisément. Pendant quelques années l'influence de Fénelon sur Saint-Cyr et sa fondatrice a été considérable. Mais une rupture avec Fénelon, nommé archevêque de Cambrai en 1695, devient inévitable, lorsque le quiétisme est condamné et que les idées du prélat se rapprochent de cette doctrine. Le nouvel archevêque perd son poste de précepteur à la Cour en 1697 et doit se retirer définitivement dans son diocèse. Les lettres de Madame de Maintenon témoignent de façon détaillée de cette cabale qui a troublé l'Église de France et qui a suscité l'indignation du roi. Selon Languet de Gergy, auteur au XVIII^e siècle d'une biographie de Madame de Maintenon aujourd'hui perdue, le roi a douté de la sincérité de celle-ci et ses reproches auraient été si amers qu'elle a même craint une disgrâce.²⁸ Ces quelques exemples parmi beaucoup d'autres suffisent à montrer

²⁷ Voir H. Hillenaar, "Madame Guyon et Fénelon", in Beaudé J. e.a. (eds.), *Madame Guyon* (Grenoble: 1997) 145-171.

²⁸ Selon Languet de Gergy, cité d'après Lavallée Th., *Histoire de la Maison royale de Saint-Cyr, 1686-1793* (Paris: 1856) 169.

combien cette correspondance est riche d'information pour tous les historiens de cette période.

Une nouvelle édition indispensable

La nouvelle édition de la correspondance de Madame de Maintenon compte plus de 5000 lettres qui s'adressent à quelques centaines de correspondants se répartissant sur cinq réseaux différents: la famille, les hautes personnalités politiques, les ecclésiastiques – cercle très vaste –, les religieuses de Saint-Louis et les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr et enfin un petit groupe de correspondants intimes. Il est certain que les lettres concernant le projet éducatif mis en place à Saint-Cyr sont les plus nombreuses. Comme on l'a déjà remarqué, les éditeurs du XIX^e et du XX^e siècle, Langlois y compris,²⁹ en ont laissé beaucoup de côté au motif qu'elles étaient répétitives et de peu d'intérêt.³⁰ Un tel critère ne se justifie pas et ne répond pas aux exigences d'une édition critique moderne. Celle-ci devrait aussi permettre de révéler une épistolière qui mérite de trouver toute sa place dans l'histoire du genre.

Redécouvrir une épistolière

En effet, d'un point de vue littéraire, 'dire d'une lettre qu'elle dépeint la société du temps n'est pas, comme le rappelle Roger Duchêne, en faire l'éloge'³¹ encore faut-il qu'une correspondance offre au lecteur l'occasion de cette 'rencontre d'un épistolier (ou d'une épistolière)' dans laquelle l'éminent spécialiste de Madame de Sévigné voit la finalité de toute lecture d'un corpus épistolaire et le révélateur ultime de

²⁹ M. Langlois a publié une édition incomplète et restée inachevée: *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon*, 4 vol. (Paris: 1935–1939). Jusqu'ici c'est l'édition la plus fiable, mais elle ne va que jusqu'à 1701. Les autres éditeurs sont Angliviel de La Beaumelle et Th. Lavallée. Le dernier a publié parmi d'autres recueils une édition des *Lettres historiques et édifiantes adressées aux Dames de Saint-Louis*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1856), dans laquelle on trouve un bon nombre des lettres concernant Saint-Cyr.

³⁰ S'il est question de répétitions dans les lettres, c'est plutôt le cas dans les lettres d'instructions morales aux religieuses.

³¹ Duchêne R., "Lettres. Essai de définition", in Escarpit R. (ed.), *Dictionnaire international des termes littéraires* (Paris: 1973/2000).

sa valeur. La correspondance de Madame de Maintenon offre précisément une telle rencontre.

Intéressantes pour l'historien parce que considérablement documentées aussi bien sur les questions religieuses que politiques ou éducatives qui agitent la France pendant tout le Grand Siècle, et souvent considérées de ce seul point de vue, les lettres de Madame de Maintenon adressées à ses correspondants entre 1650 et 1719, ne livrent pas seulement un donné informatif essentiel, mais elles inscrivent celui-ci dans un genre particulier, dont les codes et l'esthétique modèlent aussi en retour les informations fournies. Ces effets de mise en scène scripturale s'observent aussi paradoxalement, dans les lettres à forte densité informative et dont le caractère historique tendrait à faire oublier au lecteur moderne la part d'intentionnalité qu'elles recèlent. Ainsi, dans les nombreuses lettres adressées à la princesse des Ursins,³² l'information transmise et même accumulée pour la *camarera mayor*, n'est jamais un donné brut. Les filtres qui séparent les faits de référence – nouvelles de la Cour, événements et décisions royales liés à la guerre de succession d'Espagne, questions éducatives, etc. – et leur restitution dans la lettre, sont nombreux: sélection bien sûr en fonction des attentes de la destinataire, mais aussi visée fréquente d'un double destinataire,³³ activation permanente d'une mémoire mondaine et d'expériences antérieures communes,³⁴ usage enfin d'un code linguistique et de pratiques langagières partagées qui font jouer la connivence avec la destinataire et modèlent le traitement du contenu événementiel.

³² La correspondance hebdomadaire entre les deux femmes, engagée à partir du retour de Madame des Ursins en Espagne en 1706, représente plus de 400 lettres jusqu'à la fin 1716. C'est dans une lettre du 8 janvier 1717 à Madame de Caylus que Madame de Maintenon déclarera: 'J'ai reçu une lettre de Madame des Ursins sur le renouvellement de l'année. Notre commerce est tout à fait fini'.

³³ Cet autre lecteur postulé est la Reine d'Espagne et c'est à elle qu'est par exemple destiné l'encens répandu avec largesse sur la duchesse de Bourgogne. L'insistance sur les moindres faits ou dits de la duchesse sont moins révélateurs de leur importance effective que du souci de louer ainsi indirectement la sœur de la jeune princesse.

³⁴ On sait que c'est dans les cercles des hôtels d'Albret et de Richelieu que celle qui n'était encore que Madame Scarron avait rencontré, dès les années 1660, la future Madame des Ursins. Sur cette relation complexe, voir Loyau M., "La princesse des Ursins et Madame de Maintenon: entre la gloire et le renoncement", in *Actes du colloque 'Les Belles-Lettres à la Cour'*, *Cahiers Saint-Simon* 35 (2007) 54–60.

Entre simplicité, naturel et abaissement hyperbolique

Cette part d'intentionnalité forte, traduite dans des choix scripturaux, est constitutive de toute écriture épistolaire, et se manifeste clairement dans la correspondance de Madame de Maintenon, même si l'épistolière affirme fréquemment l'absence de tout art et de toute recherche. Mais grâce aux travaux de Roger Duchêne,³⁵ ou aux synthèses éclairantes d'Alain Viala et de Myriam Maître,³⁶ le lecteur moderne a appris à tenir cette revendication pour ce qu'elle est: un simple *topos* constamment réutilisé dans l'écriture féminine et développé dans les genres où elle peut plus librement s'exercer, c'est-à-dire celui de la lettre ou ceux, mineurs, que suscite la littérature éducative naissante – avis, entretiens, conseils, etc. La revendication d'une écriture non travaillée, livrée dans sa simplicité, est donc à placer du côté de cet 'abaissement hyperbolique' dont Myriam Maître a très précisément démonté le mécanisme rhétorique. Relevant ce procédé chez les Précieuses, elle a montré que ce *topos* de la modestie féminine, renvoyant à une valeur féminine traditionnelle, 'est surtout une clef pour la captation de la bienveillance' et, à terme, 'le moyen d'une subtile inscription dans le champ littéraire'.³⁷ Madame de Maintenon, n'a donc pas oublié les leçons du cercle scudérien lorsqu'elle écrit au duc de Noailles:

Je voudrais, mon cher duc, pouvoir me souvenir de la disposition de cette lettre, qui vous a plu, pour en recommencer une du même style, car j'aime fort à vous plaire. Mais vous savez qu'il n'y a pas beaucoup d'étude dans ce que j'écris, et dans ce que je dis, et que s'il y a des traits vifs solides et brillants, on les doit à un beau naturel, qui même a été peu cultivé.³⁸

Elle saura user du même procédé chaque fois qu'elle risquera d'être taxée d'auteur. C'est bien ainsi qu'il faut lire le discours qui enveloppe

³⁵ Parmi ses très nombreux travaux, nous renvoyons ici plus particulièrement à "L'Esthétique de la négligence" (*Ecrire au temps de Madame de Sévigné. Lettres et texte littéraire*. Seconde édition augmentée (Paris: 1982) 47–61 et à "Une grande Dame et la rhétorique" 62–75.

³⁶ Viala A., *La France galante: essai historique sur une catégorie culturelle, de ses origines jusqu'à la Révolution* (Paris: 2008); Maître M., *Les Précieuses. Naissance des femmes de lettres en France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 1999).

³⁷ Maître, *Les Précieuses* 392–93.

³⁸ Lettre du 19 juillet 1710, au duc de Noailles (éd. Geffroy II).

l'envoi à Madame de Vandam d'une saynète écrite pour les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr:

C'est donc pour vous que j'ai écrit tout ceci sans aucun ordre; je m'en suis aperçue en le relisant. Vous entendrez bien mon langage sans que je me donne la peine de le corriger. Vous verrez bien que ce n'est pas une *Conversation* à donner au-dedans, et encore moins au dehors: elle n'a nul agrément. Je prie Dieu que vous y trouviez de l'utilité.³⁹

L'audace d'une composition, lorsqu'on est femme, doit être fortement cautionnée: l'imperfection de l'écriture et sa soumission à un enjeu supérieur, moral et spirituel, sont donc simultanément avancées pour justifier l'écrit proposé. Mais ce qui s'apparente plus largement au 'dénî d'auctorialité', n'est pas en soi une spécificité de l'écriture maintenonienne puisqu'il s'observe chez bien des femmes qui écrivent en cette seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle.⁴⁰ Plus caractéristique est en revanche la surutilisation du *topos* de la modestie féminine dans la correspondance de Madame de Maintenon. Sa vie auprès d'un monarque dont elle rappellera à l'occasion le despotisme typiquement masculin,⁴¹ ainsi que sa position stratégique de femme d'influence ne peuvent que renforcer l'usage de ce discours d'autodépréciation codé. En relation avec des interlocuteurs sur lesquels il est possible d'agir, hommes de pouvoir, militaires ou ecclésiastiques, l'épistolière traite en effet de sujets habituellement hors du champ de l'écriture féminine, ou marginalement abordés par ses consœurs. Mais surtout la lettre ne se limite pas alors à mettre en débat des positions concernant la guerre ou la conduite des affaires religieuses. Dans bien des cas, la missive se fait action et vise à obtenir un effet sur le destinataire, une action en retour et une conversion au point de vue de l'épistolière ou du Roi dont elle est le relais.⁴²

Cette intrusion dans des domaines traditionnellement masculins, doit donc être constamment 'négociée' par des formules d'abaissement qui, loin de refléter une adhésion à la vision anthropologique de la

³⁹ Lettre du 22 mars 1715, à Madame de Vandam.

⁴⁰ Voir à ce sujet Timmermans L., *L'accès des femmes à la culture (1598-1715). Un débat d'idées de Saint François de Sales à la Marquise de Lambert* (Paris: 1993).

⁴¹ 'Ne croyez pas, Madame, que je puisse mettre des paravents devant ma grande fenêtre; on n'arrange pas sa chambre comme on veut quand le Roi y vient tous les jours [...]'. (Lettre du 16 septembre 1713, à Madame de Glapion).

⁴² La correspondance avec le cardinal de Noailles, par exemple, mériterait à elle seule une analyse de ces rapports de force et des tensions qu'ils génèrent aussi dans l'écriture.

femme soumise, vise au contraire à faire admettre l'intervention et à assurer son efficacité auprès du destinataire. Le procédé est patent dans une lettre au cardinal de Noailles, où après avoir longuement rapporté des propos critiques tenus sur lui, l'épistolière se dédouane de cette relation en ajoutant immédiatement: 'Vous voyez, Monseigneur, le désordre de ma lettre. Revenons au fait [...]'.⁴³ Or la structure de la lettre est loin d'être erratique et les lignes qui précèdent ne sont qu'un détour argumentatif, et en aucun cas un 'désordre'. L'écriture s'emploie donc à voiler ce que pourrait avoir d'ostentatoire et de choquant chez une femme, une volonté tenace, celle de ramener le cardinal rétif dans le droit chemin des volontés royales.

Stratégiques, la peinture des imperfections et la revendication d'une écriture 'sans art', affectent donc aussi bien la *dispositio* (la manière dont les contenus seront organisés) que l'*elocutio* (le choix des mots, des formules). Elles croisent aussi l'affirmation d'une catégorie esthétique dominante, bien au-delà des seuls écrits féminins, celle du naturel. Or le naturel irrigue d'autant plus aisément l'écriture épistolaire qu'il est servi par un deuxième *topos* convergent, celui de la lettre comme une autre conversation poursuivie avec un absent.⁴⁴ Madame de Maintenon construit d'ailleurs le modèle pédagogique de cette manière d'écrire, toute 'naturelle', lors d'une visite dans une classe où elle relate comment elle a appris au jeune duc du Maine, désarmé à l'idée de devoir rédiger une lettre pour le Roi, la manière de procéder. L'épisode, est ainsi restitué dans un des *Entretiens* transcrits par les Dames de Saint-Louis:

Madame de Maintenon lui dit:

- Mais *n'avez-vous rien dans le cœur* pour lui dire?
- Je suis bien fâché, répond-il, de ce qu'il est parti.
- Écrivez-le, cela est fort bon.

Puis elle lui dit:

- *Est-ce là tout* ce que vous pensez? N'avez-vous rien de plus à lui dire?
- Je serai bien aise qu'il revînt, répondit le duc du Maine.

⁴³ Lettre du 24 septembre 1707.

⁴⁴ Voir "Art de la lettre, art de la conversation à l'époque classique en France", in Bray B. – Strosetzki C. (éds.), *Actes du Colloque de Wolfenbüttel* (Paris: 1995). Myriam Maître souligne l'interaction des deux genres en rappelant que 'La conversation mondaine, considérée comme un genre littéraire oral, s'invente paradoxalement au moment où le régime de l'imprimé s'est largement imposé [...]'. L'idéal classique de familiarité et de naturel dans la conversation s'élabore donc aussi, sinon essentiellement au travers des genres écrits, qui inventent sans doute beaucoup plus qu'ils ne reflètent ces formes nouvelles de la sociabilité mondaine' (*Les Précieuses* 462–463).

- Voilà votre lettre faite, lui dit Madame de Maintenon, *il n'y a qu'à le mettre simplement comme vous le pensez*, et si vous pensiez mal, on vous redresserait.

C'est de cette manière, ajouta-t-elle, que je lui ai montré, et vous avez vu les jolies lettres qu'il a faites.⁴⁵

Le précepte posé est celui d'une transparence idéale qui ferait coïncider le sentiment et son expression, sans interposer aucun artifice et l'expérience emblématique consacre, pour le jeune duc du Maine comme pour les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr auxquelles l'anecdote est rapportée, les vertus du naturel et du style simple.⁴⁶ L'épistolière reprend elle-même le mythe de cette transposition directe du sentiment dans l'écriture lorsqu'elle écrit à Madame des Ursins:

[...] vous croyez bien, Madame, que *je ne suis pas tranquille, vous vous en apercevrez peut-être au désordre de ma lettre*; je suis honteuse de celle que j'ai l'honneur d'écrire à la Reine, mais vous connaissez mon coeur, Madame, et vous me pardonnerez tout le reste.⁴⁷

Ce naturel, revendiqué dans la lettre, n'est que l'application d'un critère que la mondanité a depuis longtemps érigé en valeur esthétique dominante et qui impose, à l'opposé du pédantisme et de la posture docte, que tout savoir soit donné comme en passant, sans anticipation, dans les occasions que fournissent le déroulement de l'échange et le jeu des interactions langagières. Les lettres de Madame de Maintenon signaleront donc fréquemment ce que l'on pourrait taxer de défauts mais qu'il convient de prendre comme les marqueurs intentionnels d'une élaboration sans apprêt, aux antipodes d'une construction rhétorique. Leur présence entend aussi signifier le degré d'intimité établi avec le destinataire. L'épistolière s'excusera ainsi auprès de Madame des Ursins: J'ai l'honneur de vous écrire avec un grand désordre et à mesure que les choses me viennent [...],⁴⁸ ou bien elle badinera avec Madame de Dangeau, déclarant '[...] endoctrinez bien notre Agnès qui sera une très bonne ménagère, et du reste peu de sens. *Vous voyez,*

⁴⁵ "Rapport d'une visite aux Demoiselles de la classe bleue", Bibliothèque municipale de Versailles, ms. 65, 212. Réédité dans: *Comment la sagesse vient aux filles. Propos d'éducation*, ed. P.-E. Leroy – M. Loyau (Paris: 1998) 237–241.

⁴⁶ Sur la question du naturel, nous renvoyons aux analyses de Molinié G., "La question du style naturel", in Biet C. (éd.), *L'idée de nature au début du XVIII^e siècle, Littératures classiques* 17 (1992).

⁴⁷ Lettre du 9 septembre 1709, à Madame des Ursins. C'est nous qui soulignons.

⁴⁸ Lettre du 9 juin 1714, à la même.

Madame, que je ne sais ce que j'écris [...]'.⁴⁹ Ailleurs encore, elle désignera avec légèreté, pour un correspondant masculin, une construction syntaxique peu conforme: 'Il y a quelque chose d'irrégulier à cette phrase, mais nous n'y regardons pas de si près. J'écris derrière le dos de M. de Pontchartrain qui parle fort vite et fort haut; sans compter les autres distractions'.⁵⁰

Si, dans certains cas, des conditions matérielles extérieures – interruption, fatigue ou présence de tiers – justifient ces irrégularités, l'image d'une lettre qui s'élabore 'au fil' de l'écriture relève autant d'une coquetterie stylistique et de l'artifice⁵¹ que d'une soumission à ces contraintes liées au moment de l'énonciation. Les procédés caractéristiques de cette négligence quelque peu étudiée sont divers: retours en arrière, ajouts, processus d'autocorrection au fil de l'écriture, ou énumération de nouvelles, données dans un désordre apparent.

Le refus de citer de manière trop précise et l'effacement systématique des sources et références trop exactes, relèvent de la même esthétique. Dans la correspondance de Madame de Maintenon la citation, qu'elle soit religieuse ou littéraire, affectera donc d'être floue: les références littéraires à telle fable de La Fontaine à propos de la communication naïve de documents internes à Saint-Cyr,⁵² à Voiture ou à La Rochefoucauld⁵³ ne sont jamais qu'incidemment convoquées et de manière allusive; les références à des écrits spirituels sont introduites par des formules vagues, comme dictées par une mémoire qui ne se piquerait pas d'exactitude: 'Saint François de Sales dit quelque part', 'il dit en un endroit'. Le texte lui-même ne se veut pas davantage exact mais est souvent livré par le biais d'une reformulation et inséré dans le réseau du discours de l'épistolière comme dans cette lettre où le propos salésien, indirectement rapporté, devient une simple opinion que la suite de la lettre s'emploie à contester pour finir en raillerie:

Quelque déférence que j'aie pour saint François de Sales, j'ai de la peine à convenir qu'il est plus difficile de se supporter soi-même que de supporter les autres, car nous avons pour nous un grand défenseur dans notre cœur, et personne ne parle pour ce prochain si souvent insuppor-

⁴⁹ Lettre du 18 juin 1705, à la marquise de Dangeau. C'est nous qui soulignons.

⁵⁰ Lettre du 25 janvier 1701, au comte d'Ayen.

⁵¹ Lettre du 9 juin 1714, à la princesse des Ursins.

⁵² Lettre du 24 novembre 1716, à Madame de Caylus.

⁵³ Lettre du 16 février 1698, à Madame de Caylus et lettre à Madame la marquise de Dangeau, de septembre 1707 (voir Geffroy, II 139).

table; ce bon saint n'avait vécu ni enfermé dans une communauté ni exposé aux courtisans.⁵⁴

L'écriture de la lettre traduit ici la parfaite assimilation d'une esthétique galante qui s'emploie à effacer les traces même de cette maîtrise pour n'en retenir que l'agrément. Anticipant sur le jugement de Saint-Simon évoquant la 'teinture' durable laissée par la fréquentation des ruelles précieuses, la fidèle Mademoiselle d'Aumale verra dans cette maîtrise un des traits dominants de la personnalité de Madame de Maintenon:

Les personnes qui ont eu l'honneur de la voir jusqu'au dernier moment savent bien que son esprit a toujours été dans son naturel et même dans l'agrément, et si on ose le dire, dans le badinage.⁵⁵

Calculs et stratégie

Paradoxalement, ce naturel scriptural, loin de signifier un relâchement de vigilance ou une simple spontanéité, s'accompagne au contraire d'une conscience aiguë du texte qui s'élabore; il suppose aussi sa mise à distance pour permettre son évaluation en référence aux normes de la bienséance ou au code implicite du bien-dire féminin. La moindre transgression, même involontaire, d'un tel pacte est aussitôt décelée et corrigée, comme dans cette lettre au marquis de Montchevreuil où la séduction d'une écriture moraliste est aussitôt récusée:

Du reste, écrit Madame de Maintenon, je suis bien persuadée que vous êtes en grand repos, et toutes les peines domestiques n'approchent point de celle que l'on a ici; voilà comme tout est mêlé. Après cette petite moralité, je vous dirai que quoi que l'on fasse, mon mignon sera un ignorant [...].⁵⁶

Le texte est donc constamment soumis à l'instance critique que représente son auteur, anticipant les réactions de son futur lecteur, qui pourrait ici trouver la formulation axiomatique trop pompeuse sous une plume féminine. Madame de Maintenon met ainsi en œuvre cet *aptum*, dérivé de la rhétorique cicéronienne, qui règle l'écriture de la

⁵⁴ Lettre du 26 septembre 1714, à Madame de Glapion.

⁵⁵ "Mémoire sur Madame de Maintenon", Bibliothèque municipale de Versailles, ms. F 729 66.

⁵⁶ Lettre du 20 juin 1681, au marquis de Montchevreuil.

lettre comme la conduite de l'honnête femme en société et qui sert de constante référence aux prescriptions développées dans les 'secrétaires' contemporains ou les chapitres des ouvrages de civilités consacrés à la conversation ou à son pendant scriptural, la lettre. Mais dans la correspondance maintenonienne, cette adaptation tient aussi de la conduite armée, dans une Cour où 'il faut se servir d'une maxime de Plutarque, un peu dure à la vérité mais nécessaire, qui est de vivre avec tout ce que vous voyez sur le pied qu'ils seront vos ennemis'.⁵⁷ Dans un tel contexte, l'écriture de la lettre relève donc toujours d'un calcul très précis qui la surdétermine, anticipant fréquemment la manière dont elle sera éventuellement relayée vers d'autres destinataires indirects. La lettre du 29 février 1712, adressée à l'archevêque de Rouen, offre un bel exemple de cet usage calculé des informations dans un réseau épistolaire complexe:

Il est vrai, Monsieur, que j'ai mandé à M. le curé de Saint-Sulpice que vous ne croyiez point qu'il fallût renvoyer l'affaire des évêques à Rome; mon intention a été en lui mandant ce que vous m'aviez écrit, de faire ce que je vois qui est arrivé; j'ai cru qu'il vous le confierait [...]. Je n'en ai rien dit au Roi [...].

Sans doute faut-il voir là une des multiples traductions de cette 'rationalité de la société de Cour'⁵⁸ qui modèle toutes les formes les plus apparentes de sociabilité, astreint les courtisans 'dans leurs rapports avec autrui, à un comportement judicieusement calculé et nuancé'. Dépasant la simple adaptation prescrite par les manuels de savoir-vivre et les lois de l'honnêteté, la lettre joue un rôle essentiel pour celle qui vit au sein de ces réseaux de forces conflictuelles. A ce titre, elle ne sera donc jamais innocente ou abandonnée mais soumise à des processus de contrôle permanent qui interdisent de lire naïvement les éventuels épanchements du cœur et les protestations d'amitié de l'épistolière, ou d'accréditer ses actes de soumission ou d'admiration.

Madame de Maintenon met d'ailleurs elle-même en abyme ce processus de construction parfaitement dominé, lorsqu'elle souffle à certains de ses correspondants la trame précise de la lettre qu'ils doivent écrire pour capter la bienveillance du Roi⁵⁹ et obtenir la faveur qu'ils

⁵⁷ Lettre du 5 août 1681, au marquis de Montchevreuil.

⁵⁸ Elias N., *La Société de cour*, Paris 1985 (1969 pour la 1^{ère} édition allemande) 107.

⁵⁹ 3 janvier 1708, à l'archevêque de Rouen: 'Je vous conseille de ne lui pas parler souvent, et d'en mettre plusieurs à la fois, vous pourrez aussi quelquefois lui écrire, il faudra que ce soit succinctement'.

quêtent: le guidage très précis ainsi effectué apparaît dans la correction de certains termes, dans les formulations alternatives proposées ou même dans les suggestions d'argumentaire plus ou moins détaillées. L'épistolière s'institue même éventuellement correctrice jusque pour l'archevêque de Noailles auquel elle suggère quelques modifications dans un mandement:

J'ai mis une croix au mot de débauche qui est très bien placé, mais peut-être le trouvera-t-on grossier, car on est délicat. J'ai mis une autre croix à ce mot de naturel sur l'éloignement des sacrements, parce que je ne l'ai pas bien entendu [...].⁶⁰

La correspondance de Madame de Maintenon permet aussi de saisir sa conception de la langue et du style, en relation avec les normes dominantes de l'époque dans ces deux domaines. On y lit en effet la revendication d'un style coupé, et le refus de la période⁶¹ ou de toute forme affichée de rhétorique, même si cette revendication peut connaître quelques entorses, l'épistolière pouvant ici ou là céder à la tentation de quelques périodes ternaires,⁶² antithèses, balancements, pointes, ou goût de l'assonance.⁶³ L'attention scrupuleuse aux registres est aussi constante et s'exerce à l'égard de tous les correspondants:⁶⁴ les excès de tous ordres sont dénoncés avec une ironie plus ou moins bienveillante comme dans la leçon délivrée à un jeune séminariste, où l'épistolière déclare:

Je crois votre lettre très exacte, dans toutes les règles; mais je l'aurais voulu plus simple, écrivant à une femme; votre bon cœur est pressé de reconnaissance et d'amitié pour moi, il faut le dire sans chercher des

⁶⁰ Lettre du 21 février 1696.

⁶¹ Voir *Lettres Maintenon* I, lettre 57, du 31 octobre 1674, à M. l'abbé Gobelin.

⁶² Voir par exemple une lettre du 1^{er} décembre 1707: 'Madame de Goulhers est ici, errante dans tous les chemins, dans tous les degrés et au long de toutes les murailles [...]'; voir aussi lettre du 17 mars 1696: 'mes compliments sur ce mariage tant désiré, tant promis, tant remis [...]'.
⁶³ Voir à titre d'exemple, la lettre du 17 octobre 1707, à Madame la Princesse des Ursins: 'Oui certainement, Madame la duchesse de Bourgogne s'en donne à cœur joie, et de chasses et de comédies, et de repas et de cavalcades et de jeux et de promenades'; 'Nous sommes gelés, crottés, mouillés, ennuyés, et pour moi attristée de me voir, pour si longtemps éloignée de mes chères filles [...]'. (lettre du 21 juin 1708, à ma Sœur de Fontaines); ou encore la lettre du 31 mars 1718, à Madame la comtesse de Caylus, 'le souvenir du passé tue, le présent met le sang en mouvement, l'avenir fait transir'.

⁶⁴ Lettre du 15 décembre 1718, à M. de Glapion, séminariste de Saint-Cyr.

termes extraordinaires et des expressions plus propres pour une déclamation que pour une lettre [...].⁶⁵

Dans cette perspective le ‘bon français’, loin d’être une simple norme qui séparerait la langue nationale du dialecte ou du patois, épouse chez Madame de Maintenon, comme chez les codificateurs contemporains, un clivage social: certaines tournures ou emplois de mots dénoncent plus sûrement l’origine du locuteur que tout autre procédé de divulgation. La façon de s’exprimer, qu’il s’agisse du lexique ou de la syntaxe, trahit la basse naissance et cet aspect de la civilité va de pair avec les défauts qui affectent la tenue physique ou plus globalement le comportement en société.⁶⁶

Parmi ces ‘méchantes expressions’ fermement proscrites par l’épistolière, figurent aussi les proverbes ou locutions proverbiales, dont l’utilisation dans les lettres est donc soigneusement dosée, limitée à quelques citations indirectes et souvent détournée. Cette utilisation badine s’apparente à l’esprit ludique qui, dans les jeux mondains, recyclera des énoncés partout décriés pour en faire la matière de nouveaux jeux littéraires,⁶⁷ voire la source de compositions dramatiques. Madame de Maintenon en usera de même, opérant à son tour un second détournement en adaptant, à des fins pédagogiques cette fois, le proverbe dramatique pratiqué dans les cercles mondains. Dans ses lettres elle adopte en tout cas la norme partout posée par les théoriciens de l’usage⁶⁸ et si elle ne renonce pas à employer un adage imagé, elle rappelle explicitement les conditions qui permettent cet emploi.

Cette attention à la langue qui trouvera dans l’éducation saint-cyrienne de nombreuses traductions, marque chez Madame de Maintenon le souci de trouver un point d’équilibre, à égale distance d’un

⁶⁵ Voir lettre du 28 décembre [1696], à Madame de Brinon: ‘A propos de bonne mère, est-ce vous qui achevez de tourner la tête à celle de Gisors? car le style est encore plus étonnant qu’il ne l’était, et la Mère des Anges me fait espérer des vers pour notre Monarque; c’est le plus simple des noms qu’elle lui donne. Il se porte à merveille, notre Monarque, et son âme va mieux que jamais [...]’.

⁶⁶ Lavallée, *Entretiens* 346, *Entretien LXXIX* avec les Demoiselles de la classe Verte, juillet 1716.

⁶⁷ Voir Charles Sorel, *Les Recreations galantes. Contenant diverses Questions plaisantes avec leurs Réponses, le Passe-temps de plusieurs petits Jeux, quelques Enigmes en prose, le Blazon des Couleurs sur les Livrées & Faveurs, l’Explication des Songes et un Traité de la Phisionomie* (Paris, E. Loyson: 1671).

⁶⁸ Vaumorière, dans l’ouvrage qu’il consacre aux *Lettres sur toutes sortes de sujets*, en 1690, rappelle ainsi que ‘Les gens polis ne mettent plus dans leurs lettres, ni fables, ni proverbes, ni sentences’ (éd. 1714, XXXII).

purisme excessif ou du relâchement, d'un respect rigide des normes et d'une libre créativité. Cette position 'moyenne', comme le style éponyme, est emblématique de celle qui sera aussi recherchée dans le discours moral tenu aux Demoiselles par leur Institutrice, langue et mœurs ayant fondamentalement partie liée. C'est aussi cette caractéristique esthétique que la réception de la correspondance au XIX^e siècle valorisera constamment, dans les manuels et les ouvrages rhétoriques destinés aux élèves.⁶⁹

Raillerie, Détournement et Esprit Ludique: les Traces de la Pratique Mondaine

Les entrées pour une étude esthétique de ces lettres pourraient donc être nombreuses concernant une correspondance féminine rédigée lors de la seconde partie du XVII^e siècle, dans une période où, comme le souligne Alain Génétiot, les canons esthétiques de ce que l'on appellera le classicisme, se configurent en intégrant précisément les apports de la préciosité et de l'esthétique galante.⁷⁰ Deux traits esthétiques récurrents et associés doivent être évoqués: la raillerie et le détournement.⁷¹ Ils servent, dans la lettre, à masquer la sèche et froide rigueur rationnelle de ces stratégies d'écriture et adoucissent l'échange en introduisant un jeu avec le destinataire déjà préconisé par Mademoiselle de Scudéry dans la conversation consacrée aux lettres.⁷² Ce dernier jeu existe aussi d'une autre manière encore, dans la lettre à caractère 'pédagogique': adressée de manière apparemment personnelle, celle-ci glisse facilement vers un autre statut, celui de la lettre circulaire comme le

⁶⁹ Sur la faveur des textes maintenoniens au XIX^e siècle par exemple, on se reportera à la communication de Bray B., dans "Autour de Françoise d'Aubigné, marquise de Maintenon", *Albineana. Association des amis d'Agrippa d'Aubigné* 10–11 (1988), 1999.

⁷⁰ Alain Génétiot rappelle dans sa synthèse récente intitulée *Le Classicisme* (Paris: 2005), que 'la littérature mondaine et galante, née de l'improvisation libre de la conversation polie, a donc une grande importance, tant sociologique que littéraire, sur la caractérisation du public et de la future esthétique classique à laquelle elle impose un ton et un style nouveau, l'atticisme galant'.

⁷¹ Ces conduites font partie des 'fictions fondatrices' du 'pacte scripturaire galant' que Delphine Denis définit dans *Le Parnasse galant. Institution d'une catégorie littéraire au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 2001) 15–16.

⁷² Voir Madeleine de Scudéry, "De la manière d'écrire des lettres", in: *Conversations nouvelles sur divers sujets* (Paris, Barbin: 1684) II et *Conversation sur les louanges qui oppose la louange délicate à la basse flatterie*, ed. D. Denis, *De l'air galant et autres conversations (1653–1684). Pour une étude de l'archive galante* (Paris: 1998).

montre une réponse faite à Madame du Pérou mais visant une autre rédactrice:

Si la Communauté est telle que ma Sœur l'assistante la peint dans sa lettre, ma Sœur de Radouay sera contrainte de la canoniser: l'assiduité au chœur, la ferveur dans la prière, l'union dans les esprits, la joie dans les récréations, le concert dans les charges, tout est à souhait, et si ma Sœur de Radouay pouvait lire la période qui la regarde, elle comprendrait toute votre sensibilité pour les louanges. Mais je me garderai bien de la lui envoyer, ne la voulant point tenter.⁷³

Au moment même de son élaboration, la lettre pédagogique est déjà pensée comme une « manne » pour d'autres lectrices – ou auditrices, si la lettre est lue à haute voix. Cette projection détermine un 'régime' spécifique de l'écriture pédagogique, oscillant entre un 'vous' singulier et un 'vous' collectif, entre le développement d'exemples particuliers en contexte et l'élargissement rapide à la loi, à la maxime éducative générale. Conçue pour être 'réutilisée', la lettre éducative n'est pas seulement 'adressée', mais 'destinée' pour reprendre la distinction posée par Geneviève Haroche⁷⁴ et elle peut à ce titre migrer vers d'autres usages, voire d'autres genres tels que les *Avis*.

Quoique présente dans un corpus adressée à des religieuses, la pratique de cette raillerie fine, dont La Rochefoucauld fournit une définition à laquelle Madame de Maintenon souscrirait aisément,⁷⁵ suppose la connivence avec le destinataire; elle s'avère aussi très proche du mode d'échange mis en œuvre dans la conversation mondaine. Tout peut servir à l'alimenter, et au premier plan le champ lexical de la dévotion. Celui-ci devient alors l'objet d'un détournement que Madame de Maintenon pratique en reprenant un procédé déjà familier pour certains de ses contemporains. Comment ne pas voir là les réminiscences de pratiques littéraires dans lesquelles s'illustrera par

⁷³ Lettre du 15 août 1711, à Madame du Pérou.

⁷⁴ Haroche-Bouzinac G., *L'épistolaire* (Paris: 1995).

⁷⁵ La Rochefoucauld F., "De la différence des esprits", *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. L. Martin-Chauffier (Paris: 1957) 219. La définition de La Rochefoucauld est tout à fait parallèle au portrait louangeur de Madame des Ursins: 'J'aime les femmes modestes, sobres, gaies, capables de sérieux et de badinage, polies, railleuses, d'une raillerie qui enferme une louange, dont le cœur soit bon, et la conversation éveillée, et assez simples pour m'avouer qu'elles se sont reconnues à ce portrait, que j'ai fait sans dessein mais que je trouve très juste'. (lettre du 12 juin 1707, à Madame la Princesse des Ursins).

exemple un auteur comme Guilleragues⁷⁶ – précisément une des relations durables de Madame de Maintenon – et qui privilégient toutes les formes d’intertextualité et de détournement? La lettre de conseil éducatif ou de direction, les deux contenus étant souvent mêlés, permet ainsi l’hybridation linguistique et stylistique: noviciat, obédience, examen, conduite, actes parfaits, mais aussi jeûne ou carême, pour ne citer que quelques termes, deviennent les assaisonnements d’un échange épistolaire qui puise abondamment au langage dévot et que menace incidemment l’écueil du sacrilège:

Je vois bien que vous retiendrez quelque chose de moi, mais c’est à savoir si ce sera quelque chose de bon; je crains plutôt que vous n’en reteniez un certain tour de raillerie dans la conversation qui m’est naturel et qui ne convient pas tout à fait à des religieuses.⁷⁷

Les lettres aux Dames de Saint-Cyr ne cesseront de refléter cette irréductible tension entre les qualités valorisées par les pratiques mondaines et les valeurs dominantes dans la vie conventuelle. Leur écriture, de ce point de vue, leur confère une place tout à fait particulière au sein de la grande catégorie des lettres de direction spirituelle ou morale féminines.⁷⁸

Correspondance et mise en scène du moi

Mais au-delà de ces traits scripturaux, la correspondance de Madame de Maintenon livre aussi, par la présence de motifs récurrents, un autoportrait épistolaire. En effet si la lettre semble le plus fréquemment répondre à des exigences fonctionnelles – transmission d’information, argumentation d’ordre moral ou politique – elle peut aussi offrir

⁷⁶ Nous pensons à son *Confiteur* (1652–1653) mais aussi à l’écriture précisément hybride des *Lettres Portugaises* (1669) si finement analysée par Volker Schröder, dans: “Les méditations de Mariane: la matrice mystique des *Lettres portugaises*”, in *La Femme au XVII^e siècle. Actes du colloque de Vancouver. University of British Columbia* (octobre 2000), Biblio 17, 138 (Tübingen: 2002) 283–299.

⁷⁷ Lavallée Th, *Entretiens sur l’Éducation des filles* (Paris: 1854) Entretien XXXII, 111 (1702).

⁷⁸ Ces aspects ont été plus largement explorés dans un article antérieur: Christine Mongenot, “*J’ai un talent pour la morale: Madame de Maintenon et la tentation de la direction spirituelle dans sa correspondance avec les Dames de Saint-Louis à Saint-Cyr*”, *Lettre et réflexion morale. La lettre, miroir de l’âme*, éd. G. Haroche-Bouzinac (Paris: 1999).

l'espace idéal pour une reconstruction de l'image de soi mise à mal par une trajectoire personnelle pour le moins moralement ambiguë. Car être là sans l'avoir souhaité, triompher sans avoir désiré vaincre, être au plus près du pouvoir sans prétendre à aucun, vivre dans le siècle et dans sa fraction la plus mondaine – la Cour – malgré le goût de la retraite constituent autant de paradoxes qui décrédibilisent le discours sur la vertu partout tenu et contredisent les modèles de vie féminine brossés pour les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr comme pour leurs institutrices, les incitant à se satisfaire d'une pieuse *mediocritas*.⁷⁹

‘Entre diction et fiction de soi, l’autoportrait épistolaire relève d’une double logique: se dire et se faire’, comme le rappelle Brigitte Diaz.⁸⁰ La correspondance de Madame de Maintenon convoque ainsi trois types de représentations féminines qui permettent à l’épistolière de construire une réévaluation de son propre personnage: la figure de la bonne amie, celle de la victime résignée et finalement celle de la vieille femme. Les deux dernières représentations sont d’ailleurs à interpréter en relation avec la construction plus large d’un discours moral pessimiste qui, s’il se radicalise dans la dernière décennie de la correspondance, apparaît précocement et ne sera fondamentalement jamais révisé.

Dans un siècle où le goût de la retraite est une aspiration qui hante jusqu’au plus mondain de ses acteurs, et où les exemples de ces arrachements à la vacuité de la vie dans le monde ou à la Cour abondent, Madame de Maintenon n’échappe pas aux tiraillements d’une double aspiration. Son goût pour l’influence, pour la proximité du pouvoir et des lieux où il s’exerce, implique la vie à la Cour et donc une situation au cœur de rapports constamment biaisés par les enjeux du pouvoir et de la représentation sociale; mais une autre voix, dans la correspondance, dit aussi l’aspiration à un autre espace, privé celui-là, et l’idéal d’une vie recentrée autour de relations plus limitées et fondées sur des valeurs partagées. Au nombre des goûts personnels qui vaillent d’être sauvegardés subsiste la pratique de l’amitié, relation susceptible d’échapper à cet univers de l’opacité ou de la duplicité. La correspon-

⁷⁹ Le concept de juste milieu – *aurea mediocritas* – notion que la Renaissance avait revisitée, est loin d’être étrangère à la dévotion salésienne dont Madame de Maintenon se nourrit. Nous renvoyons sur ce point aux éclairages fournis par une synthèse récente: *Eloge de la médiocrité. Le juste milieu à la Renaissance*, Naya E. – Pouey-Mounou A.-P. (éds.) (Paris: 2005).

⁸⁰ Diaz B., “Avant-propos”, in Diaz B. – Siess J. (éds.), *L’épistolaire au féminin. Correspondances de femmes (XVIII^e-XX^e siècle)* (Caen: 2006) 9.

dance offre un espace pour la représentation idéalisée de cette relation, fondée sur un certain nombre de 'lieux' que les lettres reprennent, quels que soient leurs destinataires: affirmation d'une expérience partagée qui fonde la connivence,⁸¹ utilisation de codes communs, usage de surnoms,⁸² tous procédés que l'on retrouve déjà dans la représentation idéale de la conversation amicale mise en scène par Madeleine de Scudéry dans ses romans et dans les volumes de conversations qu'elle en extrait à partir des années 1680.

Les lettres installent cette représentation d'intimité par une série de formules établissant le pacte amical et confidentiel et garantissant une forme d'abandon: des protestations telles que 'vous connaissez ma faiblesse', 'vous savez mieux que d'autres, Madame, mon sentiment', ou leurs variations nombreuses, ne doivent cependant pas être prises littéralement mais interprétées comme les marqueurs nécessaires d'une véritable rhétorique amicale. Une preuve en est donnée lorsqu'*a contrario* le destinataire s'avise de déceler un sentiment ou un état d'âme involontairement exprimé. La réaction est alors immédiate et nette: 'Je ne sais où vous prenez que je vous ai écrit une lettre mélancolique; je n'ai aucun sujet de l'être et personne aussi ne l'est moins'.⁸³

On pourrait multiplier les exemples qui prouvent que cette écriture dite 'intime' est loin d'être assimilable à une écriture de l'abandon.⁸⁴ La correspondance de Madame de Maintenon avec plusieurs destinataires féminines met en scène ce discours de l'amitié et, à travers lui, l'image de la 'bonne amie' que l'épistolière se targue d'être. Tel est le cas pour Madame des Ursins: le pacte initialement passé est bien celui de l'amitié. Mais, dans les faits, leur longue séparation compliquée

⁸¹ Le rappel des lieux fréquentés ensemble et des expériences communes agréables est ainsi un lieu commun de ces lettres d'amitié: 'Le couvent était bien plus tranquille et nous étions fort à notre aise aux Cordeliers de Noisy et dans les promenades que nous faisions ensuite' (lettre du 6 mai 1713, à la duchesse de Ventadour).

⁸² Voir sur ce point le développement et les analyses consacrées à la 'Cabale amicale' et à l'usage des surnoms au sein de ce cercle, dans Mongenot C., *Conversations et Proverbes de Madame de Maintenon ou la naissance du théâtre d'éducation. Suivis de textes inédit* (Champion, Paris: à paraître).

⁸³ Lettre du 11 juillet 1684, à Charles d'Aubigné.

⁸⁴ L'écriture de la lettre amicale chez Madame de Maintenon constitue donc l'un des 'motifs contingents' identifiés par Geneviève Haroche et intègre dans sa topique, comme elle l'a précisément montré, l'affirmation du sentiment, l'expression du manque, l'assurance du soutien, la sympathie dans les épreuves, le récit de nouvelles, le désir/attente d'une réponse, le reproche pour le silence, le bulletin de santé, la demande de gages ou de preuves, la recommandation de confidentialité et une mise en scène de la réception, etc.

par leurs intérêts divergents dans la guerre de succession d'Espagne, par leurs fortes personnalités respectives et par leurs aspirations à des modes de vie différents – modèle de la retraite pour Madame de Maintenon, persistance du modèle de la vie héroïque chez Madame des Ursins – conduit inévitablement à la rupture. Le contrat est donc, dès 1711, brisé en profondeur, ce qui n'empêche pas que ne subsiste durablement un code commun de raillerie, de compliments élégants, véritable trompe-l'œil pour parer ce qui n'est désormais plus qu'une amitié de papier.

Le même phénomène s'observe aussi, quoique de façon moins nette et plus lente, dans les échanges avec Madame de Dangeau qui se distendent progressivement pour se rompre définitivement après la retraite de Madame de Maintenon à Saint-Cyr et les accusations de jansénisme portées à l'encontre d'une amie de si longue date. Seuls les échanges avec Madame de Glapion semblent laisser filtrer une part de confiance plus véritable et moins retenue ou maîtrisée; cependant ils ne s'opèrent plus par lettres mais dans des 'entretiens', restitués par la pieuse émule. Celle-ci les rédige en s'imposant sans doute une autocensure ou en les soumettant au contrôle de l'Institutrice elle-même: il s'agit donc, là encore, d'une image reconstruite.

Reconstruite est également la figure de la victime résignée, voire sacrificielle qui hante de nombreuses lettres. Le terme n'est pas excessif si l'on se réfère à la lettre adressée en 1689 à Madame de Vancy, lettre dans laquelle Madame de Maintenon ne craint pas de déclarer à propos de sa vie à la Cour: 'c'est une manière de martyr assez extraordinaire mais je vous assure qu'il est douloureux'.⁸⁵ Parfois décliné sur un mode railleur, le *topos* de la servitude au milieu des grandeurs, accompagne la peinture d'une existence dans laquelle 'tout ce qui reluit n'est pas or', pour reprendre le titre d'un proverbe rédigé à l'intention des Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr.⁸⁶ Le propos victimaire est aussi tenu à la Princesse des Ursins, sur le ton de la raillerie cette fois, après le refus du Roi de lui accorder l'installation des paravents dans sa chambre à Fontainebleau: '[...] on n'arrange pas sa chambre comme on veut quand le Roi y vient tous les jours, et il faut périr en symétrie'.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *Lettres Maintenon* I, lettre 655 du 8 octobre 1689, à Madame de Vancy.

⁸⁶ Il alimente aussi la conversation intitulée "De la faveur" et nourrit plusieurs entretiens avec Madame de Glapion, qui tend à la fondatrice un miroir que celle-ci choisit d'orienter à sa guise.

⁸⁷ Lettre du 18 septembre 1713.

Telle lettre insiste sur le harcèlement de l'entourage,⁸⁸ sur l'incommodité des voyages,⁸⁹ ou simplement sur la tyrannie conjugale,⁹⁰ telle autre sur l'impossibilité de se concentrer, sur la quantité d'entretiens à accorder, ou sur les avanies subies de la part des courtisans.⁹¹ L'ensemble à travers la correspondance – et depuis le début de l'ascension sociale de Madame de Maintenon – construit finalement l'image d'une existence qui échappe aux vaines satisfactions de la gloire, ou les monnaie du moins d'une amertume qui en exclut la jouissance. Retournée en mortification, la vie de Cour ainsi évoquée dans les lettres offre au personnage public une occasion de réhabilitation.

Dans la correspondance court parallèlement un autre *topos*, celui de la vieillesse et de la dégradation. Il constitue une variation assombrie du discours de l'hypocondrie tenu dès les premières années de la vie à la Cour et qui associe malaise physique et expiation, comme dans cette phrase adressée à son confesseur, l'abbé Gobelin, où celle qui commence son inexorable ascension déclare déjà: 'J'ai été malade, tout l'hiver, je suis mieux présentement et j'ai fort envie de me sauver'.⁹² Avec le temps le portrait physique devient volontairement chargé tandis que se lit en filigrane une aspiration à la délivrance:

Avez-vous la cruauté de vouloir que j'ouvre ma porte jusqu'à ce que je sois à l'agonie? Je ne vois goutte, je n'entends pas, on ne m'entend point, parce que je ne prononce plus; je suis un squelette vivant. J'avoue qu'il se promène souvent, mais c'est comme les ombres, qui n'ont pas accoutumé de chercher la compagnie.⁹³

⁸⁸ Lettre du 18 juillet 1711, à Madame du Pérou: 'les Princes me poursuivent jusqu'à confesse'.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: 'Je me suis bien aperçue de ma vieillesse dans notre marche, car j'en ai été très fatiguée [...]'.
⁹⁰ Voir la lettre proche du 10 février 1695, à Godet, évêque de Chartres: 'Je ne vous ai pas dit la moitié des peines que j'endure: les hommes sont tyranniques, j'en suis convaincue; ils ne sont pas capables d'amitié comme les femmes. Il n'y en a pas meilleur que le Roi, mais il faut souffrir de tout et Dieu permet, pour mon salut, que je souffre beaucoup de lui'.

⁹¹ Voir à titre d'exemple, la lettre du 16 mars 1711: 'Où avez-vous pris, mon cher Duc, que je suis affligée des discours des courtisans, vous qui savez que nous vivons d'injures?'
⁹² Lettre du [23] décembre 1673. Voir aussi la lettre du 29 juillet 1674 'Je me consomme de chagrin et de veilles, je sèche à vue d'œil et j'ai des vapeurs très mélancoliques'.

⁹³ Lettre du 13 mars [1713], à Madame des Ursins.

L'épistolière n'hésite pas à se peindre 'accablée de dents qu'il [lui] reste',⁹⁴ ni à se déclarer 'accablée de fluxions dans la tête et sur les dents',⁹⁵ allant jusqu'à évoquer son 'visage mourant de vieillesse' ou sa 'caducité'.⁹⁶ L'image du spectre vient parfois se surimposer,⁹⁷ ajoutant la dernière touche à une représentation de soi finalement proche de ces 'vanités' dans lesquelles le crâne représenté joute le fruit charnu et rappelle l'inanité de la vie humaine. Nul doute que, l'âge gagnant, les malaises physiques n'augmentent, mais la longévité de l'épistolière souligne aussi la part de recreation dans ce discours de la décrépitude, qui court bien avant le grand âge et qui ressort autant du lieu commun moral que d'un sentiment physique réel. Nul doute non plus que le portrait ne soit parfois un peu chargé à d'autres fins que celles d'une peinture réaliste. Cette évocation calamiteuse sert parfois de prétexte pour échapper à l'assaut des solliciteurs et protéger l'épistolière d'obligations excessives.⁹⁸

Mais cet autoportrait s'inscrit aussi dans un discours nostalgique sur le monde antérieur avec lequel il semble que la rupture soit désormais consommée. Les lettres à la princesse des Ursins offrent la plus grande densité de ces oppositions binaires entre temps passé et temps présent: temps où l'on savait se tenir alors que les contemporaines se relâchent dans leur conduite comme dans leur tenue,⁹⁹ temps où l'art de la conversation était encore pratiqué, alors que le vide et l'inanité des conversations se constatent partout,¹⁰⁰ temps de la jeunesse à tout jamais idéalisé par celle qui voit s'estomper autour d'elle les marques

⁹⁴ Lettre du 13 novembre 1713, à Madame des Ursins.

⁹⁵ Lettre du 12 novembre 1713, à l'évêque de Chartres.

⁹⁶ Lettre du 2 novembre 1712, à Madame de Bouju.

⁹⁷ En 1711, par exemple, le motif est ainsi décliné pour trois destinataires différents, pour les Dames de Saint-Louis ('Je ne saurais plus par où finir et je n'ai plus de force ni d'esprit ni de corps, quoique ma santé soit meilleure qu'elle ne devrait être à mon âge'), pour le duc de Noailles ('Toute ma consolation est fondée sur ma vieillesse qui m'annonce une mort qui finira bientôt tous mes soucis') et enfin pour Madame des Ursins, le 30 août ('Vous croyez bien, Madame, que je ne suis pas gaie. Je ne comprends pas que je vive si longtemps').

⁹⁸ Lettre du 25 janvier 1711, au maréchal de Villeroi, voir aussi la lettre du 16 octobre 1713, à Madame des Ursins où elle suggère railleusement: '[...] j'ai une douleur de tête insupportable qui me vient d'un excès de princesses'.

⁹⁹ 'Les manières sont un peu changées et les coiffures ridicules sont les moindres défauts de celles qui les portent; je me garderai bien de vous faire la description de nos mœurs présentes [...]' (lettre du 8 octobre 1713, à Madame des Ursins).

¹⁰⁰ Voir la lettre du 17 juillet 1705, à Madame de Caylus: 'Nous avons grande impatience de vous revoir, mais nous voudrions avoir de l'esprit, de la galanterie, de l'invention, et tout cela nous manque entièrement car il n'en est plus du tout question

de l'esprit galant et d'une certaine politesse.¹⁰¹ La lettre, surtout à partir des années 1710–1711, devient ainsi le laboratoire d'un discours pessimiste sur le monde qui nourrit aussi le discours moral à l'adresse des Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr. L'institutrice rôde des sujets qui seront ensuite repris dans des avis aux Dames de Saint-Cyr, ou dans les saynètes composées pour leurs élèves. Cette circulation des thèmes et des formulations de la lettre vers d'autres genres pratiqués par son auteur, suggère l'intérêt qu'il y aurait aussi à étudier, indépendamment des genres dans lequel il s'inscrit, les spécificités de ce discours moral féminin. Loin des formes majeures du discours moral illustré par un La Bruyère ou un La Rochefoucauld, cherchant à cette lucidité sombre de simples retombées dans un mode de vie effectif, l'épistolière propose dans ses lettres une simple propédeutique à la vie ordinaire: acceptation lucide de la dichotomie entre la personne et le personnage au sein d'un monde conçu comme un théâtre d'illusions, nécessité consentie à l'art de ruser, exercice enfin d'un libre arbitre féminin limité, pris entre la résignation au joug conjugal et la pratique difficilement défendue de quelques goûts personnels.

Loin de se résumer à une source documentaire, la correspondance de Madame de Maintenon relève donc aussi d'une mise en scène scripturale de soi, et le monde référentiel qui y est convoqué est toujours livré à travers ce filtre. C'est là que réside la dimension littéraire de ces lettres, dimension qui n'est pas seulement le produit d'une réception particulière ou datée. Elle est inscrite dans le temps de leur composition par une épistolière consciente de ses effets, et usant de techniques avec des intentions esthétiques.

Conclusion

L'édition la plus exhaustive possible des lettres de Madame de Maintenon permet ainsi d'ouvrir de nouvelles perspectives. Ces textes permettent de nuancer les jugements critiques, voire tendancieux longtemps

où nous vivons. On joue, on baille, on s'ennuie, on ramasse quelque misère les uns des autres, on se hait, on s'envie, on se déchire [...]'.
¹⁰¹ Voir la lettre du 29 mai 1713, à Madame des Ursins: 'Quelle lettre je viens de recevoir de vous, Madame ! Quel style, quelle politesse, quelle finesse, quelles louanges cachées sous les apparences de la raillerie et quelquefois d'injures ! il me reste encore assez d'idée de l'esprit que j'ai vu autrefois pour vous entendre, Madame [...]'.

véhiculés par la tradition historiographique et littéraire. Ils constituent aussi une chambre d'écho pour de nombreux débats contemporains, religieux et théologiques, mais aussi moraux, concernant les problématiques liées à 'l'honnête vie' en société et à la définition des rôles féminins en cette fin du XVII^e siècle. Mais ce donné culturel large est surtout perçu à travers une véritable poétique épistolaire féminine, issue de la préciosité et simultanément porteuse de quelques-uns des traits dominants d'une esthétique classique qu'il serait réducteur de limiter aux modèles de la grande prose et du style noble.

Une grande partie de cette correspondance échappe ainsi à des représentations, parfois contradictoires, de l'écriture féminine, telles celles que véhiculent certaines traditions littéraires dès le XVII^e siècle, en en valorisant la dimension pathétique ou l'esprit de badinage. Elle représente au contraire une tentative, souvent réussie, pour deviser 'honnêtement', en cette seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle, de nombreuses questions souvent hors du champ des préoccupations féminines. Ces lettres constituent donc à la fois un témoignage historique sur le grand Siècle, mais aussi un jalon essentiel dans le long processus d'acculturation des femmes.

Bibliographie

- BERTIERE S., *Les Reines de France au temps des Bourbon/2: Les femmes du Roi-Soleil* (Paris: 1998).
- BLUCHE F., *Louis XIV* (Paris: 2007²).
- BOSSANGES frères, *Lettres inédites de Madame de Maintenon et de Madame la princesse des Ursins*, 4 vols (Paris: 1826).
- BOTS H. – BOTS-ESTOURGIE E. (éds.), *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon*, avec une préface de Marc Fumaroli et une introduction de Hans Bots et Christine Mongenot, 7 vols (Paris: 2009–2012).
- BRAY B., “Autour de Françoise d’Aubigné, marquise de Maintenon”, *Albinea* 10–11 (1999).
- BRAY B. – STROSETZKI C., *Art de la lettre, art de la conversation à l’époque classique en France* (Paris: 1995).
- CHALINE O., *Le règne de Louis XIV* (Paris: 2005).
- COCÂTRE-ZILGHIEN PH. – NEVEU B., “Saint-Cyr, Institut religieux et Fondation royale”, *Revue de l’Histoire de Versailles et des Yvelines* 74 (1990), 29–31.
- CORDELIER J., *Madame de Maintenon, une femme au grand siècle* (Paris: 1955).
- DENIS D., *Le Parnasse galant. Institution d’une catégorie littéraire au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 2001).
- , *‘De l’air galant’ et autres conversations (1653–1684). Pour une étude de l’archive galante* (Paris: 1998).
- DESPRAT J., *Madame de Maintenon (1635–1719) ou le prix de la réputation* (Paris: 2003).
- DIAZ B. – SIESS J., *L’épistolaire au féminin. Correspondances de femmes (XVIII^e–XX^e siècle)* (Caen: 2006).
- DUCHENE R., “L’Esthétique de la négligence”, *Ecrire au temps de Madame de Sévigné. Lettres et texte littéraire* (Paris: 1982²) 47–61.
- , “Une grande Dame et la rhétorique”, in *Ecrire au temps de Madame de Sévigné. Lettres et texte littéraire* (Paris: 1982²) 62–75.
- , “Lettres. Essai de définition”, in Escarpit R. (éd.) *Dictionnaire international des termes littéraires* (Paris: 1973, rééd. 2000).
- ELIAS N., *La Société de cour* (Paris: 1985) (1969 pour la 1^{ère} édition allemande).
- GENETIOT A., *Le Classicisme* (Paris: 2005).
- HAROCHE – BOUZINAC G., *L’épistolaire* (Paris: 1995).
- HILLENAAR H., “Madame Guyon et Fénelon”, in Beaude J. et al. (éds.), *Madame Guyon* (Grenoble: 1997) 145–171.
- LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. L. Martin-Chauffier (Paris: 1957).
- SCHRÖDER V., “Les méditations de Mariane: la matrice mystique des *Lettres portugaises*”, in *La Femme au XVII^e siècle* (Tübingen: 2002) 283–299.
- LANGLOIS M. (éd.), *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon*, 4 vols (Paris: 1935–1939).
- LAVALLEE Th., *Histoire de la Maison royale de Saint-Cyr, 1686–1793* (Paris: 1856).
- , *Lettres historiques et édifiantes adressées aux Dames de Saint-Louis* (Paris: 1856).
- , *Entretiens sur l’Éducation des filles* (Paris: 1854).
- LEROY P.E. – LOYAU M. (eds.), *Comment la sagesse vient aux filles. Propos d’éducation* (Paris: 1998).
- LEROY P.E. – LOYAU M., *L’estime et la tendresse. Correspondances intimes* (Paris: 1998).
- LOYAU, M., “La princesse des Ursins et Madame de Maintenon: entre la gloire et le renoncement”, *Cahiers Saint-Simon* 35 (2007) 54–60.
- , *Correspondance de Madame de Maintenon et de la princesse des Ursins* (Paris: 2002).
- MAÎTRE M., *Les Précieuses. Naissance des femmes de lettres en France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 1999).
- MICHAUD – POUJOLAT (éds.), *Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires pour servir à l’Histoire de France* (Paris: 1839).

- MOLINIÉ G., “La question du style naturel”, in BIET C. (éd.), *L’idée de nature au début du XVII^e siècle, Littératures classiques* 17 (1992).
- MONGENOT C., *Conversations et Proverbes de Madame de Maintenon ou la naissance du théâtre d’éducation. Suivis de textes inédits* (Paris: à paraître).
- , “J’ai un talent pour la morale: Madame de Maintenon et la tentation de la direction spirituelle dans sa correspondance avec les Dames de Saint-Louis à Saint-Cyr”, in Haroche – Bouzinac G. (éds.), *Lettre et réflexion morale. La lettre, miroir de l’âme* (Paris: 1999).
- NAYA É. – POUHEY-MOUNOU A.-P. (éds.), *Eloge de la médiocrité. Le juste milieu à la Renaissance* (Paris: 2005).
- PICCO D., “Tourner doucement le premier usage de leur raison à connaître Dieu’ ou l’instruction religieuse des filles de bonnes maisons dans la France du XVII^e siècle”, in Lopez D. – Mazouer C. – Suire E. (eds.), *La religion des élites au XVII^e siècle* (Tübingen: 2008) 37–52.
- RAPLEY É., *Les dévotes. Les femmes et l’Église en France au XVII^e siècle* (Québec: 1995).
- SCUDÉRY Madeleine de, *Conversations nouvelles sur divers sujets* (Paris, C. Barbin: 1684).
- SÉVIGNÉ Madame de., *Correspondance*, éd. R. Duchêne, 3 vols (Paris: 1974–1978).
- SOREL C., *Les Recreations galantes. Contenant diverses Questions plaisantes avec leurs Réponses, le Passe-temps de plusieurs petits Jeux, quelques Enigmes en prose, le Blazon des Couleurs sur les Livrées & Faveurs, l’Explication des Songes et un Traité de la Phisionomie* (Paris, E. Loyson: 1671).
- TIMMERMANS L., *L’accès des femmes à la culture (1598–1715). Un débat d’idées de SAINT FRANÇOIS de Sales à la Marquise de Lambert* (Paris: 1993).
- VAUMORIÈRE P., *Lettres sur toutes sortes de sujets* (Paris, J. Guignard: 1690).
- VIALA A., *La France galante: essai historique sur une catégorie culturelle, de ses origines jusqu’à la Révolution* (Paris: 2008).

FRENCH WOMEN WRITERS AND HEROIC GENRES

Perry Gethner

In the early modern period intellectual women in France, especially those belonging to the salons, came to view themselves as full-fledged participants in the cultural life of their country. While they were painfully aware of the prejudices against *femmes savantes*, and women writers in particular, there was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a significant increase in the number of women who produced and published literary texts. These writers saw a dual role for themselves, as spokespersons for their sex during the *querelle des femmes* and as proud and capable members of a distinguished and ongoing cultural tradition. This embrace of the overall cultural milieu explains a fascinating, if largely overlooked phenomenon, namely, their willingness to cultivate not only novels but also the literary forms that were deemed the most prestigious and most erudite by the male establishment, verse epic and tragedy, to which I will add the tragic opera libretto. Even the rare male theorists who were sympathetic to the efforts of women writers tended to believe that men alone could handle heroic and elevated themes and genres, whereas women could excel only in shorter and intimate genres, such as the personal letter and the novel, where the focus was on the emotional dimension of private life. Of course, the vast majority of women writers who chose to publish focused on genres that maximized their strengths, which did not always include erudition, and/or genres such as the novel, which tended to be more lucrative. But there were a few who dared to challenge male claims to exclusivity in key areas and who proudly proclaimed their ability to equal the accomplishments of their male colleagues. Although almost totally ignored by modern literary histories, their contributions deserve more recognition than they have received so far.¹

¹ Most recent general histories of epic, such as Madelénat, and even encyclopedias of the genre, such as Jackson, omit all mention of the French women. The same is true of one of the best histories of the genre within France (Calin). A notable exception is Sayce, who in a study restricted to French Biblical epic accords to Calages equal

The genre deemed to be the most prestigious by a consensus of literary theorists throughout the early modern period was the verse epic. French writers from Du Bellay to Voltaire claimed that since no language could claim the status of great literary vehicle without an acclaimed epic poem, it was crucial for France's cultural reputation that her most gifted poets undertake that onerous task. Of the several dozen epics produced in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, none of which has won much esteem from later generations, only two were by women, though three other women writers translated epics composed in other languages and periods.² One of these epics is from the late baroque period (Marie de Pech de Calages's *Judith*, 1660) and one from the Enlightenment era (Anne-Marie Du Boccage's *La Colombiade*, 1756). That any women at all dared to tackle this genre testifies both to their self-confidence and to their pride in France's project of cultural imperialism. Indeed, the very existence of these epics raises the following questions: What special perspective, if any, could a woman poet bring to the genre? And why would a French writer choose a non-French hero (Judith was a Jewess from the Biblical era, Columbus was an Italian in the service of Spain)?³

One key answer to the first question is the reduced role and importance of war, traditionally a central theme of epics. As war was considered an especially masculine activity, none of the women authors would have had any direct knowledge of it.⁴ The most commonly used method to minimize the role of warfare was to equate heroism with moral fortitude and saintliness, especially in poems with a religious

space with male poets. However, the tendency to ignore or devalue the contributions of women writers goes back to the nineteenth century.

² Anne Lefèvre Dacier, one of the foremost classical scholars of her generation, published both a translation of Homer and a detailed critical study of the *Iliad*, which she defended against some of the work's modern critics. Louise-Geneviève Gillot (mother of Mme de Saintonge) published in 1685 the first volume of a prose translation (actually a free adaptation) of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*; she never completed the project. Du Boccage also composed a much abbreviated and greatly altered verse adaptation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In addition, there was one Renaissance predecessor, Gabrielle de Coignard, who wrote a poem about Judith.

³ The choice of a female protagonist for Biblical epic, however, was not unusual or limited to women poets. As Sayce notes, Susanna, Esther and Judith were among the most common subjects, presumably because of the fascination during the first half of the seventeenth century with the *femme forte*. Sayce R.A., *The French Biblical Epic in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: 1955) 249.

⁴ Curiously, the one female writer who had actually commanded an army in real life, Alberte-Barbe de Saint-Balmon, did not write about battles in her literary compositions.

focus. The protagonist could also display his/her heroism in a variety of non-military exploits, such as Judith's overcoming of the enemy general through cleverness and seduction, or Columbus's success in his voyages of discovery. Since women poets felt especially uncomfortable when dealing with battle scenes, they found ingenious ways to get around the convention without eliminating it altogether.⁵ Calages at the start of her third canto presents the mustering of troops of Holoferne's army on the day of battle, only to have some of the captains persuade the general to postpone the combat and instead overcome their enemies by cutting off their water supply. She thus preserved at least a portion of the epic convention by describing the military formation, while she was merely following her source by not having the battle take place. Du Boccage, likewise following her source, cuts short the battle between the Spaniards and hostile natives by the arrival of a solar eclipse – an event that Columbus had accurately predicted. Nonetheless, the authors felt sufficiently concerned about critical reaction to their bending of tradition that they provided justification for their choices. Thus, Calages in her preface listed among the main reasons why she chose the designation of 'poème saint', rather than 'poème héroïque', the absence of battle scenes and the fact that the heroine's virtues, although they include courage, are not those of a warrior.

Not surprisingly, the feminocentric perspective in these works includes a glorification of the female sex, both as characters and as readers. Calages dedicated her epic to the newly crowned queen of France, Marie-Thérèse, to whom she also devoted a prefatory poem plus a complimentary mention during the invocation at the start of the first canto. She equates the queen with Judith in regard to both piety and courage, and she even expresses the hope that Marie-Thérèse will persuade her husband to undertake a new crusade in which the Holy Land will finally be liberated from the infidels. As if this were not enough, Calages addresses her preface to cultivated women, whose approbation she is especially seeking, and she cites Madeleine

⁵ This reticence would likewise affect women writers of heroic novels, like Madeleine de Scudéry, who preferred to delegate the battle episodes to her brother, Georges. In a number of key aspects Mlle de Scudéry redefined the prose equivalent of epic, paying more attention to the exploits of heroic female characters, proposing secret amorous motivations for political events, and adding a salon-inspired series of intellectual discussions among the protagonists. But a full exploration of her work exceeds the limits of the present study.

de Scudéry as a role model. In the body of the poem she amplifies the praise accorded to Judith in the book of Judith by the rulers of her town, who so greatly admire her wisdom and piety that they allow her counsel to overrule their own plans. Ozias, the chief ruler of Bethulia, accords her a status barely distinguishable from sainthood: 'cette femme divine/ Est l'honneur de son sexe, & de la Palestine, / Un parfait abrégé de toutes les vertus,/ Et qui void sous ses pieds les vices abatus' (v. 1613–1616).

Several of the episodes invented by Calages testify to her desire to glorify her own sex. The lengthy biography of the heroine furnished by the latter's maid Abra echoes some of the conventions of medieval hagiography. Judith is so fervently devout that she displays no interest in men and hopes to remain a secluded virgin, devoting her whole life to prayer. When commanded by her father to marry, she prays to God to alter her heart and let her love the husband chosen for her. God obliges, and the union is perfectly harmonious. When she resolves to meet Holoferne, an angel descends from heaven to announce that God approves her project and that he has been sent to watch over her and protect her chastity. Calages could thus combine elements from various strands of Christian panegyric (desire for perpetual virginity, self-sacrifice in obedience to the perceived will of God, ability to fulfill simultaneously and without any conflict the duties of religion, society and family), while tying all of the above to the poem's dedicatee, Queen Marie-Thérèse. Moreover, in a curious departure from her source, Calages makes Judith a mother who expresses concern that her children will be torn away from her and enslaved, if the enemy army is allowed to prevail (v. 1521–1524; in the book of Judith she is childless). Although the children are not mentioned again, Calages clearly views motherhood as not incompatible with heroic status.

Calages also finds a way to praise women artists like herself. In another invented scene she shows Judith making a tapestry depicting Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac, and the artwork is so vivid that the characters appear to come to life and speak. Not only does Calages gesture to the classical epic tradition which often showed aristocratic women weaving, and with extraordinary skill (Helen and Penelope in Homer, Arachne in Ovid), but she manages to make the artwork prefigure the artist's own life: Judith will, like Isaac, voluntarily offer herself as a sacrifice to save her people, and, again like him, will be miraculously delivered. It is fitting that Calages ends her poem with Judith's hymn of praise to God for her triumph, rather than continuing on, as

does the book of Judith, to discuss briefly the rest of the heroine's life. Moreover, the hymn is expanded into a monumental strophic poem of 96 lines, to set off Judith's talent as a gifted and inspired author.

Another ecphrastic passage allowed Calages to meditate on the varieties of female heroism. Judith admires a tapestry in Holoferne's tent that depicts episodes from the history of his people, but is troubled by one scene that depicts a woman organizing the murder of a man. Holoferne identifies the woman as Semiramis, whose story he then recounts. She is described as a distinguished warrior, as well as being gifted with beauty and a host of virtues, such as wisdom, magnanimity, modesty and piety. However, this paragon ruined her reputation by falling in love with a handsome young prince who came to visit her court. Even worse, after he had failed to respond to her overtures, she imagined that the offer of a throne would appeal to him and therefore arranged to have her husband assassinated. We are not told what happened next, for Holoferne breaks off the narration to express his horror at the queen's criminality, while Judith, having experienced an especially happy marriage, is scandalized by the idea that a wife could murder her husband. The author could have drawn an explicit parallel between Semiramis and Judith, both as models of female valor and as slayers of heroic men (though for drastically different reasons), but she abstains from doing so, giving the impression that female heroism can be dangerous unless it is divinely inspired.⁶

As for *La Colombiade*, though the poem can hardly be termed feminist by contemporary standards, there are a number of passages where Du Boccage takes the opportunity to laud women for their talents and achievements. The standard invocation of the Muses is explicitly gendered. At the start of the poem one of them, Calliope, is singled out both as the nurturer of male poets (as the mother of Orpheus) and as the precursor of modern women poets. By assisting a woman poet in writing an epic, she will prove that the heroic sphere is not off limits to

⁶ Even though Calages borrowed the idea of giving a detailed description of a tapestry in Holoferne's tent from Du Bartas's poem of the same name (1574), the differences so far outweigh the similarities that the episode can count as her invention. The sixteenth-century poet enumerates a whole series of heroes and kings (some of them from Persia, rather than Babylonia), devotes only four lines to Semiramis (v. 137–140) as opposed to Calages's full-length narration of her career lasting 110 verses, and he limits his mention of her to two respectable activities (ruling Babylonia competently following her husband's death, though he seems troubled that she donned male garb, and ordering the building of the Hanging Gardens).

women: 'Muse, viens de ton sexe étendre encor l'empire', adding that they must show that 'Nos chants, chéris des Dieux, illustrent les Héros' (3). At the start of the eighth canto, which contains the battle scenes, Du Boccage, claiming to be unequal to the task of describing such terrifying phenomena, invokes another of the Muses. Clio, the patroness of history, can confer both the knowledge and authority required to describe what is usually an all-male activity. It should also be noted that several of the luminaries she enumerates in the predictions of later European cultural history in the ninth canto are women, such as Anne Dacier for scholarship, Antoinette Deshoulières for poetry, Emilie du Châtelet for science, and Queen Christina of Sweden for philosophy. And it is hardly surprising that the women listed as exemplary in this passage are all French (or at least French by adoption, as in the case of Queen Christina following her abdication).

Another area where Du Boccage appears to bring a female perspective to bear is in her treatment of love. Joining a long list of women novelists who denounced the destructive power of passion, she makes a sharp distinction between innocent love, the only kind known in the New World prior to the coming of the Europeans, and the violent, irrational kind which was introduced there by Cupid only when urged to do so by a demon hostile to Colomb. When the demon visits the isle of Cythère he finds a host of lovers whose initial bliss has been followed by various torments, including the effects of time, boredom, scheming, insincerity and remorse. The narrator insists that such passion is not only contrary to reason, but also to morality: This type of love causes one to 'négliger/ L'amitié, le devoir, la honte & le danger' (61).

As for the portrayal of the female leads, Du Boccage endows them with a number of heroic traits, including courage, energy and self-esteem. Zama, the pure and beautiful daughter of the noble chief whom Colomb meets in the first canto, immediately falls in love with him. When her father announces that he intends for her to marry a member of their tribe who recently saved his life, she briefly experiences inner conflict between love and filial devotion, but soon resolves to marry no one but the man of her own choice. When Colomb sails away, she takes a canoe and follows him into regions just as unknown to her as to her lover. She catches up with a Spanish ship that has been cut off from the rest of the fleet, and she takes full advantage of her time with the Spaniards, learning their language and getting the onboard priest to convert her to Christianity. Since Du Boccage cannot violate history to the point of letting Colomb marry this fictional character,

she arranges for the ship containing Zama to be captured by the evil native queen; the men are all used as human sacrifices, while Zama and her female companion are given a slow-working poison. In the poem's most melodramatic episode, Zama runs away from her captors and rejoins her beloved, only to die in his arms a few minutes later. By creating this character, Du Boccage managed to combine several elements in the popular taste of her time: fascination with exotic heroines forced to deal with culture shock, such as Zilia in Graffigny's best-selling novel, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, published just a few years prior to her epic, curiosity about the New World, as reflected both in fiction and travel accounts, and the comforting belief that, though the innocence and simplicity of savage life represented a greater closeness to nature, Christian European society was ultimately superior and therefore the exotic characters needed to be introduced to and even assimilated into it. Otherness, however initially appealing, is something to be transcended, and Zama, who is prepared to accept every aspect of European civilization and who embodies many of the same Christian virtues Calages had celebrated in her heroine, such as fearlessness, fidelity and purity of heart, ends up as a full-fledged Christian martyr.⁷

The other female lead, Queen Vascona, is a fascinating blend of positive and negative traits. On the one hand, she is an intrepid Amazon who leads her troops to war and an effective ruler who has reduced most of the neighboring kings to the status of vassals. On the other hand, she presides over an odious cult dominated by black magic and human sacrifices, she is shameless in her lust (she has already divorced two husbands by age 25 and seems to keep multiple lovers), and she is extremely vindictive, declaring war upon Colomb merely because he refuses her offer of marriage. She is brave and confident enough to challenge Colomb to single combat. However, he refuses that offer, being both a gallant hero, who has no desire to kill a beautiful woman and a queen, and a man of peace, who tries yet again to end the conflict through negotiation. Unfortunately for Vascona, she is so determined in her rejection of Colomb's religion and science that she laughs at his prediction that a solar eclipse will occur that very day. The eclipse, coming on the heels of a volcanic eruption, provokes a panic among

⁷ The exotic woman forced to adjust to culture shock was frequently used as the romantic heroine in French fiction of this period. For a wider discussion, see Douthwaite.

her soldiers, and during the confusion she is shot by some unknown archer. Her death is not the most glorious possible, but it does at least occur in battle, she is never shown as defeated in single combat, and the episode could well have been inspired by the death of the brilliant female warrior Camilla in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Vascona can appeal to readers of a post-colonial bent in that she refuses to be cowed by the civilization of the Europeans and resists subjugation, defending her country's independence by force of arms. She can also appeal to feminists in her insistence on preserving the superiority of the female within marriage. Nevertheless, Du Boccage could hardly accord her unqualified approval, given her personal allegiance to Christianity and her belief in the superiority of European mores and culture.⁸

As for the choice of subject matter, Calages was writing in the midst of a period when epics on religious subjects, most of them taken from the Bible, were quite fashionable. The spirit of the Counter-Reformation was still strong in many quarters, especially as Protestantism continued to be perceived as a serious threat in the period leading up to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. For Catholic intellectuals who saw their Church as needing both cultural and spiritual support, works of art that glorified religious stories and doctrines contributed to maintaining France's status as a pious nation. Religious epics in particular, allowing for explicit parallels between past and present, could be effective in linking the France of the poet's day to the most glorious aspects of the Biblical period.

As for the choice of subject matter for *La Colombiade*, one key element was the author's friendship with Voltaire, who in his treatise on epic poetry recommended choosing a protagonist from modern history, rather than mythology.⁹ Even more importantly, she wanted to treat Columbus as a precursor of the Enlightenment, a cosmopolitan intellectual movement in which she was proud to participate. Colum-

⁸ Curiously, Watson, who views Du Boccage as a precursor of Simone de Beauvoir, limits his treatment of feminist elements in her epic to the primordial innocence of Zama, reminiscent of Eve (who was presented in the poetess's *Le Paradis terrestre* as not really being responsible for the Fall), and to the warrior prowess of Vascona, reminiscent of her tragedy dealing with the Amazons. Margolin, who discusses *La Colombiade* mainly in terms of its ideology, fidelity to history and use of sources, says virtually nothing about the work's feminist dimension.

⁹ In accordance with some of Voltaire's other prescriptions, she also eliminated the Greco-Roman gods, though she brought in some of the malevolent deities from American tribal religions to serve similar functions, and she limited her use of supernatural elements and kept them within the bounds of what was deemed *vraisemblable*.

bus, as someone who made it his mission to expand the frontiers of knowledge and bring peoples and continents together, would seem to be an ideal protagonist for a post-nationalist poem, if I may be permitted such an anachronistic term. It is probably no coincidence that the principal demon who schemes to foil the hero's plans refers to him as 'Ce Génois éclairé' and credits him with a combination of moral and scientific knowledge. Much of the second canto is devoted to a discussion of geography, astronomy, navigation and religion in which Colomb, having landed on an island populated by noble savages, impresses the tribal king with his vast store of information and his determination to devote his life to the search for more knowledge, despite the enormous dangers. The prophecy of future events accorded the hero in the ninth canto devotes as much time to accomplishments in literature and science as to political developments in the Old and New Worlds. Not surprisingly, although luminaries from a number of European countries are singled out for praise, it is the French who receive the most attention, in one of the rare places where Du Boccase waxed overtly patriotic. In her mind the post-nationalistic agenda left a certain amount of room for national pride, even if the cultural dimension of that pride tends to overshadow the political and military aspects of it.

At the same time, Du Boccase takes an eclectic view of the Enlightenment. She simultaneously sympathizes with the brave and scientifically-minded Europeans and with the noble savages who, when confronted with civilization for the first time, still prefer their simple life style and moral innocence. Like Voltaire, she allows her hero to justify civilization as an instrument of progress, especially in the areas of science, arts and crafts, refinement of manners, and improvement of life style. However, unlike Voltaire and many of her contemporaries, Du Boccase also sees the Enlightenment as fully compatible with Christianity. Part of the civilizing mission of the Europeans, in her view, was to stamp out the indigenous religions, which are presented as inadequate at best and barbaric at worst. The invented love plot, featuring a pious Colomb, genuinely dedicated to the spreading of his faith, and a pure native girl, Zama, who readily adopts it, reinforces the position that the introduction of Christianity sufficed to justify the Europeans' conquest of the New World. Indeed, in his very first speech in the poem, Colomb, speaking to his crew, displays a willingness to accept martyrdom that makes him sound like a missionary, with statements like: 'Des maux que nous souffrons la Palme est dans

les Cieux' (4). Du Boccage took the religious premise of her poem so seriously that she dedicated the work to the Pope and adopted as her subtitle 'la Foi portée au nouveau Monde'.

Whereas, to the best of my knowledge, no other French women tried their hands at the epic poem, there were roughly a dozen women who composed tragedies prior to the Revolution, and most of them had their plays staged by professional companies. While tragedy, with its focus on the noblest of heroes, was ranked together with epic at the top of the hierarchy of literary forms, writers of either gender who hoped to achieve fame and prestige were far more likely to try their hand at tragedy. After all, plays were much shorter, and one could use as models the acknowledged French masterpieces from earlier generations. The existence of a recognized national tradition in tragedy was especially advantageous for women writers, who did not possess the same educational opportunities as men and risked being faulted by male critics for lack of erudition when treating historical or mythological subject matter. Further encouragement to women writers came from the fact that the participants in many of the salons were avid theatergoers who invited playwrights to read their works-in-progress and devoted much time to discussing plays they had recently seen. Aspiring women playwrights would thus be thoroughly versed in many of the mechanics of play construction long before they first attempted to compose. However, given the rigidity of dramatic conventions by the end of the seventeenth century and the public nature of the medium (plays had to be accepted by troupes and then had to please audiences), writers with unconventional views to express had to do so very discreetly.¹⁰

In the late seventeenth century, tragedies were expected to feature energetic, larger-than-life figures, often of truly heroic stature, and plots were typically derived from classical history or mythology. Women who tried their hand at this type of play were expected to follow the lead of already canonical authors such as Corneille and portray a world dominated by aggressively manly rulers and warriors. But competing with Corneille did not necessarily mean endorsing his vision of heroism. In certain cases women playwrights present the

¹⁰ Little has been written about the distinctive contribution of the women playwrights until quite recently. In addition to the introductions to the anthologies, significant discussions include the articles on theater in Lalande's collection and Montoya's monograph on Barbier.

female protagonists as the most heroic figures and the most competent leaders. Although it was rare to feature female characters as great warriors, as Du Boccage got the chance to do in her tragedy *Les Amazones*, Marie-Anne Barbier composed two remarkable tragedies in which women successfully negotiate the world of politics. The title character in *Cornélie mère des Gracques* utilizes both her ringing eloquence and her unwavering devotion to republican principles to lead the resistance to a takeover of Rome by the aristocratic faction. While she must defer to her sons in public, since only men can hold leadership positions in the state, she is undeniably the guiding spirit of the movement, and her single-mindedness stands in contrast to her conflicted son, Caius, who vainly attempts to balance his political agenda with his love for the daughter of his main opponent. In another of her tragedies, *Arrie et Pétus*, Barbier transforms the female lead into a genuine heroic figure, unlike her historical counterpart who played no role in politics and bravely committed suicide only in order to encourage her cowardly husband to do likewise when his faction was defeated. In the play Arrie becomes the main organizer of an elaborate conspiracy designed to topple the immoral emperor Claudius and to reestablish a republican regime in Rome. She brings her fiancé Pétus into the plot only when the emperor, who has fallen in love with her, threatens to wed her by force. Pétus is rehabilitated to the extent that he fights bravely in battle, but he has no leadership ability and no grasp of political matters, despite his holding the high rank of consul. In all these tragedies Cornelian heroism lives on, but mostly or exclusively in the women. Portrayals of reigning queens in these plays are rare, and those queens, although conscientious and competent, encounter impossible difficulties and end tragically.¹¹

The other option was to question the very notion of heroism, whether practiced by men or by women. The first tragedy by a French woman writer based on classical history, Marie-Catherine Desjardins's *Manlius*, which she labeled as a tragicomedy because of its happy ending, shows a Roman military commander who fails to live up to the heroic standards set by Corneille's protagonists. Ignoring his formal promise to wed the widow of his just-deceased colleague and best friend, he

¹¹ As Conroy notes, Bernard's *Laodamie*, while directly challenging the conventional link between female rule and disorder, does not provide simplistic solutions to the problems caused by social unrest and by the perceived need for male leadership in wartime.

wantonly yields to an inappropriate passion for a captured enemy princess. When he discovers that the princess and his son Manlius are in love, he sentences Manlius to death on a technicality: the heroic young man has just violated an order to avoid attacking the enemy when he saw an opportunity to engage them successfully, and he then scored a huge victory. The entire army, defying its general, demands Manlius's pardon. The only consistent and forceful spokesperson for Roman heroism in this play is Camille, the widow who is determined to go through with her planned marriage to the general, not because she loves him, but because she is convinced, like her late husband, that it is useful for Rome's security in time of war. Indeed, she is the only one of the four leading characters who is impervious to love and who cares more for her country than for personal glory or personal happiness.

Another of the requirements of French tragedy that no writer could ignore was the inclusion of a love plot that would involve at least one of the protagonists in a wrenching internal conflict between duty and love. Yet even here women playwrights could put a subtle pro-female spin on the convention. This point can be illustrated by a comparison of two tragedies by Catherine Bernard, the first woman writer to have a tragedy staged by the Comédie Française and the only one prior to 1700 to have more than a single tragedy produced there. Her plays, *Laodamie reine d'Épire* and *Brutus*, both include double love triangles, allowing in each case for both possible scenarios, that is, two women competing for the same man and two men competing for the same woman. Yet the men never live up to the standards set by the women. In both plays the unloved woman does everything she can for the man, and is even prepared to sacrifice her own happiness in order to protect the beloved's life and/or interests whereas the unloved man behaves ungallantly, displaying spite for the woman who rejects his advances and resolving to wed her by force. In addition, the rejected males turn into outright villains, prepared to use immoral means to pursue their larger goal, which is murder or treason. An example of female altruism is Aquilie in *Brutus*: although she knows that her father will consent to her marriage to her beloved Titus only if the young man betrays his country and joins a rebellion, she refuses to make the blackmail demand, though she cannot prevent her father from doing so. Another is Nérée in *Laodamie*, who offers not just to give up her fiancé, whom she passionately loves, but also to join the ranks of the Vestal Virgins, rather than deprive him of the opportunity to become king and thus save her people from their enemies.

Bernard shows a similar dichotomy between the way her male and female characters deal with their internal conflicts. The women have a strong sense of honor and always place duty first: despite the depth of their love, they would never betray their country or shirk their public responsibilities.¹² The title character in *Laodamie*, obliged by her father's dying wish to contract a diplomatic marriage with the prince of a neighboring country, is determined to go through with it, despite her love for the dashing warrior, Gélon. When her fiancé is assassinated, she continues to stifle her feelings for Gélon until, faced with an imminent war and a popular uprising, both of which only he can control, the queen sees no choice but to offer him her hand. She admits her true feelings to Gélon but adds that she would never have acted upon them in the absence of a political emergency. When Gélon insists that he will not abandon the woman he loves (namely, the queen's sister, Nérée), she again subordinates her feelings to her obligations as queen: if he refuses the throne, despite pressure from queen and people, he must go into exile – a sentence that Gélon accepts as just. Nérée, as mentioned earlier, likewise subordinates her love for Gélon to political necessity and gives him up when it becomes clear that he is needed as king. The principal male characters in this play experience no inner conflict: Gélon, a standard knight errant, cares nothing about politics and shows loyalty only to the woman he loves, while Sostrate, the scheming and murderous villain, cares primarily about power. He claims to be in love with the queen, but it is really the throne that interests him. Neither man displays the slightest interest in the welfare of the country.

In *Brutus* it is the two male leads who experience the inner conflicts, and both make bad decisions. Titus, the heroic young patriot and elder son of the title character, has fallen in love with Aquilie, whose father turns out to be the ringleader of a conspiracy designed to restore the banished king and overthrow the newly-proclaimed republic. Although he shares his father's views (namely, that republics are superior to monarchies and that King Tarquin, a usurper and a depraved tyrant, does not deserve another chance to rule), he panics upon

¹² My reading diverges here somewhat from that of Goldwyn, who sees the female leads as feeling allegiance exclusively to love, rather than to patriarchal values; that is true to a greater degree in *Brutus* than in *Laodamie*. She also finds a feminist imagination at work in the characterization of Gélon in that he rejects personal ambition and finds satisfaction solely in an ennobling love. Goldwyn H., "Catherine Bernard et la voix dramatique éclatée", in Duchêne R. – Ronzeaud P. (eds.), *Ordre et contestation au temps des classiques* (Paris – Seattle – Tübingen: 1992) 206.

learning that his beloved's father will force her to wed his rival (who is also his brother) unless he joins the plot. Instead of putting his country and his principles first, he agrees in a moment of weakness to the betrayal. Although the conspiracy is discovered before the plot can be put into effect, Titus turns himself in and demands the death penalty for himself.

His father is nobler, but not by much. While the historical Lucius Junius Brutus has traditionally been viewed as an unfeeling and fanatical patriot, Bernard made him a highly conflicted character, torn between his determination to execute the laws at all costs and his great love and esteem for his older son, Titus.¹³ Much of the fifth act is devoted to monologues in which he bitterly complains that Rome and the bloodthirsty Senate are coercing him into making an unjust decision, just to force him to give the most extreme possible proof of his loyalty to the state. Although acknowledging that his son's previous heroism and present repentance for a brief moment of rashness amply justify a pardon, and although using words like 'furie', 'rage' and 'horreur' to describe the sentence he feels obliged to pronounce, he goes ahead with it. But the psychological and moral consequences for him are so devastating that he resolves to retire from public life and gives way to despair and denunciation of an inhumane ideology. The supposedly heroic act of sacrificing one's children for the preservation of Roman safety and justice is debunked as a monstrous error that not even Rome's principal spokesman really believes in.¹⁴

Another branch of heroic literature that would achieve great popularity but would attract few female practitioners was tragic opera. When, after several generations of resistance to the new art form first invented in Italy, the French came to embrace totally sung drama during the second half of the seventeenth century, the most successful operatic

¹³ Ekstein, in her insightful analysis of this play, goes even further and argues that Titus and his father become partially feminized in that they allow love (romantic or paternal) to relativize, 'albeit temporarily, the masculine values of patriotism and honor'. She also shows how Bernard's extensive use of various kinds of doubling subverts the notion of a single tragic hierarchy and allows for dissonant voices who object to the Roman code. Ekstein N., "A Woman's Tragedy: Catherine Bernard's *Brutus*", *Rivista di Letterature moderne e comparate* 48, 2 (1995) 135.

¹⁴ Not everyone is convinced that this revisionist view of Lucius Junius Brutus betrays a feminist perspective. Piva, for example, thinks it can be adequately explained in terms of the 'demolition of the hero' phenomenon that dominated much of French literature from the last third of the seventeenth century, coupled with the influence of Racine.

genre was the *tragédie lyrique*, a serious five-act work with a plot derived from classical mythology or chivalric romance. Because of the belief that nearly all the rules of classical dramaturgy should apply to sung dramatic forms, operatic texts received intense critical scrutiny, both as poetry and as drama. So it is not surprising that the first writers chosen to collaborate with the court composers were established poets and playwrights. Louise-Geneviève de Saintonge, already known as a salon poet when she was chosen to become the first ever female librettist in France, composed two tragic operas for the Académie Royale de Musique, *Didon* and *Circé*, staged in 1693 and 1694 respectively. That she chose (or agreed) to tackle subjects derived from two of the most acclaimed of ancient epic poems, Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, for her *tragédies lyriques*, is a testament to her self-confidence.¹⁵

The choice of the Dido and Aeneas legend was very appropriate, since it contains exciting action and pathos, as well as providing opportunities for presenting larger-than-life heroic figures and supernatural characters. Admittedly, the librettist had only limited scope for originality, since she was obligated to faithfully observe the incredibly rigid set of conventions that the *tragédie lyrique* form had developed, including use of a very limited vocabulary, a separate decor for each act, interspersing musical set pieces (arias, duets, trios) into the dialogue, one episode per act where the chorus and ballet take center stage, and extensive use of flying machines and other special effects. Nonetheless, Saintonge's pro-female agenda, though it had to remain unobtrusive, can be deduced from some of the changes she made to the original story. Didon in this version is no longer a powerful and effective ruler but rather a passive pawn of fate. Her solitude and helplessness are underscored by the amount of time she spends by herself on stage. Indeed, the opera begins and ends with monologues for her. In contrast to Virgil's account and to all other French dramatic versions of the suicide scene, where the heroine is surrounded by her sister and a group of courtiers, Saintonge has her die totally alone. And the opera ends abruptly with her final phrase, 'Je meurs', (unlike, for example, the Purcell opera where sympathetic courtiers sing a

¹⁵ The most detailed analysis of these libretti to date is that of Brooks. The music for both works was by Henry Desmarest, a young composer who had been a protégé of Lully, the father of *tragédie lyrique*. Saintonge was also a pioneer of a new operatic hybrid, the opera-ballet, that would achieve huge popularity in the eighteenth century. Due to space limitations, I shall restrict my discussion to her first libretto.

gentle and moving chorus to console her dying spirit). She expresses no emotions except anxiety and terror, apart from bursts of joy when her beloved declares his love for her. She never seems to initiate any action, apart from asking a female magician to reassure her about the future. Even her suicide is forced upon her: after she has fainted with grief upon learning of the Trojan leader's sudden departure, the ghost of her first husband Sichée appears to her in a dream, denounces her for breaking her promise of eternal fidelity to him, and commands her to die at once. As soon as she regains consciousness, she obeys that order. But the ghost is not a mere nightmare: he really appears on stage, and the audience sees and hears him. Didon does not even get the partial satisfaction that she receives in Virgil of calling down a prophetic curse upon her ex-lover. In short, this Didon is a total victim, pushed around by heartless men and gods.

If Didon is weak and unheroic, her lover Énée is no better. Unlike male protagonists in most spoken and operatic tragedies, he experiences no internal conflict between the demands of love and duty. He gets two love duets with Didon, one of which occurs within moments of his first appearance on stage, and he describes his feelings in terms reminiscent of heroes in pastoral and *précieux* fiction. In a significant departure from Virgil, motivated in part by the need to observe the unity of time, the day of the action is also the day scheduled for Énée and Didon's wedding. The celebration is interrupted first by news of the arrival of the neighboring king, Iarbe, who also wishes to marry Didon; later it is interrupted by a sudden and violent storm, sent by Jupiter to indicate his displeasure at Énée's disregarding his command to leave. Unlike his counterpart in the Latin poem, Énée shows no interest in his mission to found a new empire in Rome. Indeed, he interprets the first summons from Mercure as simply the gods' desire to test the strength of his love, and he requires a second, sterner warning from Mercure before reluctantly agreeing to bow to the divine decree. Arguably his most unheroic moment comes when he confronts his rival, Iarbe. Saintonge prevents the men from fighting a duel over Didon by having Énée's mother, Vénus, intervene. The goddess wraps her son in a protective cloud that makes him invisible (a device used by Virgil, but in a radically different context) and then reproaches the African king for trying to win his beloved solely by force of arms. The behavior of Iarbe is most ungallant: when Didon admits that she is unable to return his affection, he storms off, promising to stifle his

love and vowing vengeance against her. With this he disappears from the opera.

This portrayal of *Énée* raises some interesting questions. Why make one of the paradigmatic heroic figures from antiquity into a basically unheroic character? Why, in a genre where the conflict between love and duty was still a standard plot motivator, focus on protagonists who have failed to internalize a sense of duty? Why, in a genre intended to reflect the glory of King and court, make all three main characters fail to achieve anything glorious? Part of the answer must lie in the fact that during the final decades of the seventeenth century, following the retirements of both Corneille and Racine, dramatic pathos became more central to both tragedy and opera while conventional heroism became increasingly deemphasized or devalued. Saintonge was a leading figure in this transitional period of public taste. In fact, as I have argued elsewhere, the spoken play that she composed just prior to her tragic libretti, *Griselde*, was among the most significant precursors of the *comédie larmoyante* that would dominate the following century, and one of its hallmarks was the focus on female virtue in distress.¹⁶ But Saintonge also was part of a simultaneous trend that questioned the existence and value of the earlier heroic code. If female protagonists fail to live up to the requirements of heroism, the same is true of their male counterparts.

In conclusion, one is entitled to wonder why so few women writers cultivated the most heroic genres and why their efforts came to be forgotten. One of the answers must surely be that during the course of the eighteenth century all of these genres fell out of favor with the French public. In addition to the fact that tastes became more bourgeois and less aristocratic,¹⁷ there was a sense of fatigue with literary forms that had received too much adulation for too long and had become formulaic and repetitive thanks to overly restrictive conventions. But arguably the most crucial reason is that, especially following the Sun King's death, an increasing majority of writers of both genders preferred to stay away from genres that did not relate to

¹⁶ See my article in *Women in French Studies*, and also my edition (forthcoming) of *Griselde* in Volume 3 of the series *Théâtre de femmes de l'Ancien Régime*.

¹⁷ Ullrich Langer makes a strong case for this factor in the failure of the French to create a great epic poem. Epics came to be viewed as both boring, in a society increasingly devoted to the aesthetic goal of *divertissement*, and irrelevant, as traditionally shared religious and cultural values lost currency.

their own experiences, instead choosing forms on which they felt that they could leave their personal stamp. That a small group of French women writers did cultivate the heroic forms while those remained in vogue and that their efforts were judged respectable by their contemporaries is a tribute to their talent, intelligence, courage and determination. At least, by proving that they could successfully compete with their male colleagues, they contributed both to a pride in their own sex's accomplishments and to the nationalist program that aimed to establish France as the cultural capital of Europe. Admittedly, the extremely conservative nature of the aesthetic and political ideologies which they helped to buttress limits their status as role models, and the genres they cultivated no longer resonate with us today. Nonetheless, one must commend these writers for defying the stereotypes and prejudices that would bar them from tackling the major genres, while trying to reconcile literary constraints and conventions with an expression of their personal views.¹⁸

¹⁸ A recent study by Charlotte Simonin treats the other side of this issue, namely, the relegation of women authors to minor status and minor genres by the critical establishment and sometimes by self-censorship. See "Deuxième sexe, deuxièmes genres? Femmes auteurs et genres mineurs" in "Écrire en mineur au XVIII^e siècle", ed. Christelle Bahier-Porte and Régine Jomand-Baudry (Paris: 2009), 151–166.

Selective Bibliography

- BARBIER M.-A., *Comélie mère des Gracques*, ed. A. Montoya – V. Schröder (Toulouse: 2005).
- BROOKS W., “Madame de Saintonge et ses livrets ‘Didon’ et ‘Circé’”, in Duron J. – Ferraton Y. (eds.), *Henry Desmarest (1661–1741): Exils d’un musicien dans l’Europe du Grand Siècle* (Hayen: 2005) 193–205.
- CALAGES MARIE DE PECH DE, *Judith, ou la Délivrance de Bethulie, poème saint* (Toulouse, Colomiez: 1660).
- CALIN W., *A Muse for Heroes: Nine Centuries of the Epic in France* (Toronto: 1983).
- CONROY D., “The Displacement of Disorder: Gynaecocracy and Friendship in Catherine Bernard’s *Laodamie* (1689)”, *Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature* 67 (2007) 443–464.
- DOUTHWAITE J.V., *Exotic Women: Literary Heroines and Cultural Strategies in Ancien Régime France* (Philadelphia: 1992).
- DU BOCCAGE ANNE-MARIE, *La Colombiade, ou la Foi portée au Nouveau Monde* (London, C.G. Seyffert: 1758).
- EKSTEIN N., “A Woman’s Tragedy: Catherine Bernard’s *Brutus*”, *Rivista di Letterature moderne e comparate* 48, 2 (1995) 127–139.
- EVAIN A. – GETHNER P. – GOLDWYN H. (eds.), *Théâtre de femmes de l’Ancien Régime*, 5 vols. (Saint-Etienne: 2006–).
- GETHNER P., “Rethinking the Griselda Legend: Saintonge Versus Perrault”, *Women in French Studies* (special issue, 2008) 48–57.
- , *Femmes dramaturges en France (1650–1750), Pièces choisies*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: 1993, 2002).
- GOLDWYN H., “Catherine Bernard ou la voix dramatique éclatée”, in Duchêne R. – Ronzeaud P. (eds.), *Ordre et contestation au temps des classiques* (Paris – Seattle – Tübingen: 1992) 203–211.
- JACKSON G.M., *Encyclopedia of Literary Epics* (Santa Barbara – Denver – Oxford: 1996).
- LALANDE R.D. (ed.), *A Labor of Love: Critical Reflections on the Writings of Marie-Catherine Desjardins (Mme de Villeglé)* (Madison – Teaneck – London: 2000).
- LANGER U., “Boring Epic in Early Modern France”, in Oberhelman S.M. – Kelly V. – Golsan R.J. (eds.), *Epic and Epoch: Essays on the Interpretation and History of a Genre* (Lubbock: 1994) 208–229.
- MADELÉNAT D., *L’Épopée* (Paris: 1986).
- MARGOLIN J.-C., “Pour saluer Colomb: *La Colombiade* d’Anne-Marie du Bocage”, *Studi di letteratura francese* 20 (1994) 241–269.
- MONTAYA A.C., *Marie-Anne Barbier et la tragédie post-classique* (Paris: 2007).
- PIVA F., “Le Brutus de Catherine Bernard ou la difficulté d’être un héros”, in Piva F. (ed.), *Bruto il maggiore nella letteratura francese e dintorni* (Fasano: 2002) 125–139.
- SAYCE R.A., *The French Biblical Epic in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: 1955).
- WATSON R.T., “‘Forma Venus, Arte Minerva’: Madame Du Bocage: A Simone de Beauvoir Avant la Lettre”, *Simone de Beauvoir Studies* 7 (1990) 3–13.

TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

THE TARTAR GIRL, THE PERSIAN PRINCESS, AND EARLY MODERN ENGLISH WOMEN'S AUTHORSHIP FROM ELIZABETH I TO MARY WROTH

Bernadette Andrea

This essay addresses the methodological problem of how to assess women's agency in the early modern period beyond the positivistic search for works literally written by women.¹ It does so by arguing that women brought to England from Muslim lands during the late sixteenth century through the early seventeenth century informed the negotiation of authority by Queen Elizabeth (b. 1533; r. 1558–1603), who was the first woman since the Middle Ages to serve as England's sole sovereign,² and the negotiation of authorship by Lady Mary Wroth (c. 1587–c. 1653), who was the first English woman to write an original, rather than a translated, prose romance and sonnet sequence, *The Countesse of Mountgomerie's Urania* (1621), to which was appended *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*.³ Although much attention has been paid of late to early modern Anglo-Ottoman relations, the inaugural ventures into Muslim lands during this period focused on the route through Central Asia to Persia under the Safavid dynasty.⁴ Hence, a neglected aspect of Elizabeth's and Wroth's negotiation of authorship – of their

¹ On 'the technology and the ethos of authorship' in relation to early modern women's writing, see Ezell M.J.M., *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: 1993) 14–65. Also see Ezell M.J.M., "Women and Writing", in Pacheco A. (ed.), *A Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: 2002) 77–94, and Ferguson M.W., "Renaissance Concepts of the 'Woman Writer'", in Wilcox H. (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700* (Cambridge: 1996) 143–168.

² On previous female English rulers, see Warnicke R.M., *Women of The English Renaissance and Reformation* (Westport, Conn.: 1983) 47–66.

³ For modern editions, see Wroth M., *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. J.A. Roberts (Binghamton, NY: 1995); Wroth M., *The Second Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. J.A. Roberts – S. Gossett – J. Mueller (Tempe: 1999). For the sonnet sequence, see *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. J.A. Roberts (Baton Rouge: 1983). On Wroth's life and works, see Lewalski B.K., *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: 1993) 243–307.

⁴ Literary critics focusing on the relationship between early modern England and the Ottoman Empire and/or Morocco include Nabil Matar, Daniel Vitkus, Gerald MacLean, Jonathan Burton, Linda McJannet, Matthew Dimmock, and Matthew Birchwood.

images and their writing – has been the physical and discursive presence of women from Central Asia and Persia in England as a result of these ventures.⁵

These women range from a slave, to servants of various ranks, to an ambassador's wife. In the former case, that of the 'Tartar girl' whom the first English man to travel through Central Asia to the Safavid court, Anthony Jenkinson (1529–1610/1611), purchased with the intent of presenting to Elizabeth, the evidence consists primarily of marginalia. However, as an intended accoutrement for Elizabeth's court, this multiply marginalized subject contributed to the queen's proto-imperialist self-fashioning.⁶ In the latter case, that of Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley, the wife of the first ambassador from the Safavid court to England, the 'famous English-Persian' Robert Sherley, an ample, if often tendentious, discourse developed around her.⁷ Yet, the only evidence we have of her authorship in the positivistic sense is a petition she addressed to Elizabeth's successor, King James (b. 1566; r. 1603–1625), in defense of her husband.⁸ Less clear in the historical record are those women, both Persian and English, who accompanied Lady Sherley on her journeys back and forth between the Jacobean and Safavid courts. Nonetheless, the presence of these women is refracted through Wroth's representation of the Tartar/Persian princess in the *Urania*, as well as incidentally registered in English men's accounts.⁹

⁵ For a companion study, see Andrea B., "Persia, Tartaria, and Pamphilia: Ideas of Asia in Mary Wroth's *Urania*", in Lim W.S.H. – Johanyak D. (eds.), *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia* (New York: 2010), which focuses on male Tartars.

⁶ On Elizabethan England as 'proto-imperialist', particularly in relation to established Muslim empires, see Matar N., *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: 1998) 11–12; Goffman D., *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660* (Seattle: 1998) 4; and Matar N., *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: 1999) 10. On 'proto-orientalism', see Barbour R., *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (Cambridge: 2003) 17.

⁷ Penrose B., *The Sherleian Odyssey* (London: 1938) 174, quoting the playwright and poet Thomas Middleton (1580–1627). The Sherley brothers' ventures began during the late Elizabethan era and extended into the Jacobean era. Also see Nezam-Mafi M.T., "Persian Recreations: Theatricality in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic History, 1599–1828", PhD dissertation, Boston University (1999), and Andrea B., *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: 2007) 42–52.

⁸ James had been king of Scotland from 1567 prior to being named king of England in 1603.

⁹ For a related discussion of methodology with an emphasis on semiotics, see Guha R. – Spivak G.S. (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: 1998), esp. Guha R., "The

This essay thereby responds to the refrain in studies of early modern literature and culture, especially those focusing on English encounters outside Western Europe, that sources simply do not exist for a study of western women who traveled to these regions or, even more so, for women from these regions traveling to Western Europe.¹⁰ As such, it follows the line of questioning articulated by Margo Hendricks:

how do feminist scholars of early modern English culture understand the immigrant [*sic*] woman's position in a world which symbolically exploits her 'otherness' as a literary and cultural foundation for the construction of a particular form of womanhood at the same time as it literally conceals her presence in Renaissance England?¹¹

While Hendricks focuses on women of African descent in the context of England's expanding transatlantic trade, this essay focuses on 'the web of empire' situating English travelers as subalterns, not colonial masters, in eastern regions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹² In challenging the dismissal of the admittedly sparse evidence we have for non-European women's impact on early modern English culture, this analysis of Elizabeth's and Wroth's representations, including of themselves, *vis-à-vis* the 'Tartar girl' and the women of Lady Sherley's suite reconceptualizes English women's authorship

Prose of Counter-Insurgency" 45–84. Also see Muir E. – Ruggiero G. (eds.), *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe* (Baltimore: 1991), esp. Muir E. "Introduction: Observing 'Trifles'" vii–xxviii.

¹⁰ Andrea B., "Travels Through 'Islam' in Early Modern English Studies", *Clio: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History* 35 (2006) 241–243.

¹¹ Hendricks M., "Feminist Historiography", in Pacheco A. (ed.), *A Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: 2002) 374. 'Immigrant' as used here includes the non-volitional movement of slaves and other dependents. For related discussions in Middle Eastern Studies, see Hambly G.R.G., "Becoming Visible: Medieval Islamic Women in Historiography and History", in Hambly G.R.G. (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* (New York: 1998) 3–27. Babayan K., "The 'Aqa'id Al-Nisa': A Glimpse at Safavid Women in Local Isfahani Culture", in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World* 349–381, productively explores a methodology for charting women's agency in the absence of positivistic evidence. On the agency of elite Ottoman women during the sixteenth century, see Peirce L.P., *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: 1993). Thys-Senocak L., *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Aldershot: 2006), focuses on a similar group of women in the seventeenth century. Peirce L.P., *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley: 2003), elaborates a methodology for assessing non-elite women's agency.

¹² Games A., *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (Oxford: 2008) 6–15.

during an era of 'firsts' by acknowledging the presence of subalterns from the Islamic world as one of its facilitating conditions.¹³

The 'Tartar Girl' in Elizabethan England

The first two volumes of the second edition of Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1599), often overshadowed by the final volume on colonialism in the Americas (1600), features 'the worthy Discoveries, &c. of the *English* toward the North and Northeast by Sea' extending into Russian, Persian, and Ottoman domains.¹⁴ It includes Elizabeth's correspondence with their sovereigns and shows her increasing awareness of the politics of positioning during an era when England was a bit player in the great power politics of the region. Because the balance of power favored Islamic empires such as the Ottomans and their rivals, the Safavids, Elizabeth did not – and, indeed, could not – take an orientalist stance in her correspondence.¹⁵ Instead, she had to finesse Muslim sovereigns' perceptions of her as a supplicant and of her kingdom as a potential tributary.¹⁶ Later in the century, this eastern trade became more propitious for several reasons, including England's post-Reformation isolation from Catholic Europe, which led Elizabeth to make strategic alliances with Muslim sovereigns as like-minded iconoclasts and monotheists. Still, in negotiating this double-edged stance as defender of the Protestant faith, Elizabeth sought to conceal her efforts from domestic audiences, not only through secret negotiations, but

¹³ For a caution regarding the discourse of 'firsts', see Goldberg J., *Desiring Women Writing: English Renaissance Examples* (Stanford: 1997) 6–12.

¹⁴ Hakluyt Richard, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, made by Sea or over-land, to the remote and farthest distant quarters of the Earth, at any time within the compasse of these 1600 yeres: Divided into three severall Volumes, according to the positions of the Regions, whereunto they were directed* (London, George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, and Robert Barker: 1599), citing title page. Volume numbers refer to the divisions in the 1599 edition. All citations are to the 1599 edition unless otherwise indicated; u/v and i/j are adjusted in all early modern sources.

¹⁵ On Elizabeth's authorship of state letters – with various levels of involvement from personally penning, to dictating, to reviewing and correcting – see *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. G.B. Harrison (New York: 1968) ix–xvi, and *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, eds. L.S. Marcus – J. Mueller – M.B. Rose (Chicago: 2000) xii–xiv. All these editors deem Elizabeth the ultimate author of state letters, while noting the generally uncertain nature of authorship in the period.

¹⁶ Andrea, *Women and Islam* 1–11.

also by distancing the crown from this trade, which was initiated by joint-stock companies such as the Russia (or Muscovy) and the Levant (or Turkey) companies.¹⁷

Prior to Elizabeth's reign, English merchants sought a foothold in the Grand Duchy of Muscovy, which after 1547 became the Tsardom of Russia, with tentative forays occurring during the reigns of her younger brother, Edward VI (r. 1547–1553), and her older sister, Mary I (r. 1553–1558), who ruled with her husband, Philip II of Spain. However, it was during Elizabeth's reign that the indomitable Anthony Jenkinson, after a sojourn in the Mediterranean (wherein he gained a 'safe conduct or priviledge given by *Sultan Solymán* the great Turke [...] in the yeere 1553'), turned his attention to the lucrative Muscovy trade (II: 114).¹⁸ He traveled with a letter from Elizabeth, which yielded success for his mission and an ongoing correspondence between the queen and the Duke of Muscovy, later emperor, who greeted each other as 'most dear brother and friend' and 'our loving sister' (I: 457, 503). Jenkinson next sought the riches of Persia, also bearing letters from Elizabeth.

'The Queenes Majesties Letters [*sic*] to the Great Sophy of *Persia* [...] 1561' is the first to a Muslim sovereign in Hakluyt's collection (I: 340). It is notable for its evocation of 'the Almightye God' as point of commonality with 'the great Sophie' or the Persian shah, Tahmasp (I: 341).¹⁹ This contrasts with the rapport established in communications with the Russian sovereign who, though following the Orthodox rite, shared the doctrine of 'our onely God in Trinitie' and therefore an affinity with 'all Christian beleevers' (I: 372). Bearing this letter from 'the most excellent and gracious soveraigne Lady Elizabeth Queene of the saide Realme [of England]', Jenkinson attempted to finesse the distinction between Protestants and Catholics during his audience with the shah by identifying himself as 'neither unbeleever nor Mahometan,

¹⁷ On the former, see Willan T.S., *The Early History of the Russia Company, 1553–1603* (Manchester: 1956); on the latter, see Andrea, *Women and Islam* 131n1. For a comprehensive study, see Foster W., *England's Quest of Eastern Trade* (1933) (New York: 1967).

¹⁸ The page number is listed as 114 in the Table of Contents for the second volume on 'the South and Southeast quarters of the world' and is misprinted as 126 in the text. For the extent of Jenkinson's travels, see Morgan E.D. – Coote C.H. (eds.), *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and Other Englishmen* (London: 1886) ci–cii.

¹⁹ For the second letter, issued in 1579, see Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599) I: 418.

but a Christian'. However, when the shah learned from one of his Christian subjects ('the king of the Georgians sonne') that 'a Christian was he that beleeveth in Jesus Christus, affirming him to be the Sonne of God, and the greatest Prophet', an answer combining Christian and Muslim understandings, Jenkinson was summarily thrown out of the shah's court. As an 'unbeleever', he was deemed so 'uncleane' that his retreating path had to be covered with sand. Jenkinson discerned the realpolitik underlying this spectacle when he discovered that the recent rapprochement between the shah and 'the great Turke his brother', Suleyman the Magnificent, conspired to block his efforts to establish English trade in Persian domains. In this case, Ottoman Sunni and Safavid Shi'ia bonding trumped the triangulations the Protestant English sought with Muslims against the Catholic powers of Spain and Austria (I: 349).

Despite this initial foray, trade with the Persian Empire remained quiescent for over a decade, with attention turning to the Ottomans. By the time the queen addressed her first letter to Sultan Murad III in 1579, her formerly abridged address had burgeoned significantly:

Elizabeth by the grace of the most mightie God, and onely Creatour of heaven and earth, of England, France and Ireland Queene, the most invincible and most mighty defender of the Christian faith against all kinde of idolatries, of all that live among the Christians, and fasly [falsely] professe the Name of Christ (II: 139).

Here, Elizabeth positions herself prior to the sultan in her address to him, learning from her earlier correspondence with the shah the deleterious effects of the reverse order; she similarly emphasizes her role as 'potentissima Defensatrix' of the (reformed) Christian faith (II: 138). In doing so, she situates herself as a strict monotheist, evoking 'the most mightie God, and onely Creatour of heaven and earth', unlike, it is implied, the idolatrous Catholics with their saints and perhaps even the Orthodox with their icons (II: 139). The queen subsequently issued a series of letters to Murad's successor, Mehmed III, along with other highly ranked members of the dynasty. The most significant for a gendered analysis is her correspondence with the Ottoman queen mother, Safiye, which was accompanied by gifts of clothing, perfume, and portraits.²⁰ These letters become the basis, not only of the begin-

²⁰ For the correspondence between Elizabeth and Safiye, see Andrea, *Women and Islam* 20–29. For the correspondence between Elizabeth and Muslim male sovereigns,

nings of English men's trade in the region, but of English women's engagement with the Islamic world in the early modern period.

Yet, focusing on the 'female king', Elizabeth, as an exceptional woman authority and author of numerous letters to Muslim sovereigns effaces the significance of female subalterns in these exchanges.²¹ Likewise, while some privileged women from the Islamic empires of the Ottomans and Safavids were able to articulate an authoritative perspective, others appear incidentally in works written mostly by men.²² As literary critics and historians concerned with lives at the margins of the archives have shown, increasingly nuanced methodologies allow us to investigate how and when the subalterns of the era did speak.²³ Traces of subaltern agency surface in the records of the dominant culture, which include accounts of purchases, distributions of goods in wills, and other records of possession; diplomatic, legal, and related documents of social conflict; and literary works, which grappled with the resistance of the subaltern through catharsis, wish-fulfillment and other imaginary resolutions. Attention to the traces of women from the Islamic world traveling to England and of lower-rank English women traveling to the Islamic world prior to the mid-seventeenth century, when Quaker missions to the region began, reveals a cumulative portrait that allows us to address the agency of these gendered subalterns in the absence of their first-person narratives.²⁴

This genealogy goes back as far as Jenkinson's missions to the Russian and Persian empires, where he acquired the Tartar girl whom he planned to present to Queen Elizabeth. This multiply subaltern subject receives a fleeting reference in "A Letter of Master *Anthonie Jenkinson* upon his returne from *Boghar* to the worshipful Master *Henrie*

see Andrea, *Women and Islam* 23–24; Burton J., "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000) 130–138; and Markley R., "Riches, Power, Trade and Religion: The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600–1720", *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003) 497–501.

²¹ As Levin C., *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: 1994) notes, 'though female, Elizabeth was also in part 'kinge' (120).

²² Hambly G.R.G., "Becoming Visible", uses a range of terms to account for elite Muslim women's agency in the era, including influence (10); 'honorific' sovereignty, authority, 'real power' (11); 'matriarchy', 'direct sovereignty', 'female rule' (12); female patronage (18), and 'wielders of political power' (21). Peirce L.P., *Imperial Harem* 221, mentions Ottoman women's correspondence with prominent Safavid women.

²³ Habib I., *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500–1677* (Aldershot: 2008), builds on Hendricks's incisive questions.

²⁴ Andrea, *Women and Islam* 53–77, details these Quaker missions.

Lane Agent for the *Moscovie* companie resident in Vologda, written in the *Mosco* the 18. of September, 1559", included in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*. Recording exchanges of women between men venturing into Central Asia, Jenkinson signs off, "Thus giving you most heartie thanks for my wench Aura Soltana, I commend you to the tuition of God, who send you health with hearts desire". Yet, Hakluyt's marginal note complicates the patriarchal circuit of this exchange by incorporating women privileged by class: "This was a yong Tartar girle which he gave to the Queene afterward" (I: 305). Margaret B. Graham Morton links the acquisition of this girl to the recent conquest of "the Nagayan Tartars, "of the law of Mahomet"', to cite Jenkinson, by the expansionist Russian empire under Ivan the Terrible. Thousands were enslaved as a result, with Jenkinson recording "the price of a Nagayan Tartar slave was "a loafe of bread woorth sixe pence in England"''.²⁵ Morton interprets Jenkinson's purchase of the Tartar girl as a compassionate act, describing him as 'deeply moved' by the suffering he witnessed, although his use of the term 'wench' suggests less gracious designs on his part.²⁶ Morton also speculates whether this girl reached England, although she does not provide any evidence otherwise.²⁷ Certainly, the journey was treacherous, as the near loss of the first Russian ambassador to England, Osep Napea, in the North Sea attests. Like the African captives in Elizabeth's court, many of whom also came from Muslim regions, if this girl did reach England, she likely fulfilled an ornamental role that, while it may not have resulted in extreme privation, did not foreclose her chattel status. This status, moreover, is one she carried from the Islamic world, where Central Asians, especially girls, were sold into slavery throughout the Persian

²⁵ Morton M.B.G., *The Jenkinson Story* (Glasgow: 1962) 40, 41. For details of the trade in, and by, Tatars (the correct term, although 'Tartar' prevails in early modern English sources), see Hellie R., *Slavery in Russia, 1450-1725* (Chicago: 1982) 70, 82-83, 370, 709. On the origins of the European misnomer 'Tartar', see Cawley R.R., *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* (Boston: 1938) 188.

²⁶ Morton, *Jenkinson Story* 41. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), 2nd ed. (1989) records several definitions for 'wench' that would be current in Jenkinson's era: 'a girl, maid, young woman; a female child'; 'a girl of the rustic or working class'; 'a wanton woman; a mistress'. It was also used 'as a familiar or endearing form of address; used chiefly in addressing a daughter, wife, or sweetheart'.

²⁷ Morton, *Jenkinson Story* 55. Possible evidence that this girl did reach England may be gleaned from Arnold J., *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds: 1988) 107, where she lists the items of clothing provided to 'Ippolyta the Tartarian' in 1564.

and Ottoman empires.²⁸ Dubbed 'Aura Soltana', this gesture points towards the practice of calling enslaved Africans Caesar, Pompey, Hannibal, and other imperial names to diminish them by depriving them of their history and to elevate those English men and women who acquired them.²⁹ Incipient orientalizing discourses also suggest the possibility in the Ottoman imperial harem of slave girls, generally of Christian rather than Muslim provenance, rising to the exalted position of sultana if they became queen mothers.³⁰ Clearly, in the English system this was not an option for slave girls, but its reference would lend prestige to Elizabeth's court if only by association.

With only a fleeting reference in the accounts of English men who traveled through Russia, Central Asia, and Persia, how might we trace the resonance of this Tartar girl in English literary and cultural productions? We have evidence from the earliest records of the Muscovy Company that Tartars were being incorporated into English society, albeit as menials. As recorded in Hakluyt's first edition of *The Principall Navigations* from 1589, '2. Tartarians, which were then of the Kings [Edward VI's] Stable' were consulted by the merchants who constituted the Muscovy Company in preparation for its inaugural voyages in the mid-sixteenth century. This account continues:

an interpreter was gotten to be present, by whom they [the Tartarians] were demanded touching their Countrey and the man[n]ers of their nation. But they were able to answer nothing to the purpose: being in deede more acquainted (as one there mer[r]ily and openly saide) to tosse pottes, then to learne the states and dispositions of people.³¹

We can presume the two Tartarians are male because of their duties as stable hands. However, while Richard Hellie, in his study of *Slavery in Russia*, identifies 'a Russian slave in England in 1569', who 'could have been a Russian, a Tatar, a Finn, a Pole, or a member of any of

²⁸ Toledano E.R., *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: 1998). For Western representations of Ottoman slavery, see Malieckal B., "Slavery, Sex, and the Seraglio: 'Turkish' Women and Early Modern Texts", in Ostovich H. – Silcox M.V. – Roebuck G. (eds.), *The Mysterious and the Foreign in Early Modern England* (Newark: 2008) 58–73.

²⁹ Habib, *Black Lives* 258; cf. 135.

³⁰ Andrea, *Women and Islam* 21. For more details, see Yermolenko G., "Roxolana: 'The Greatest Empresse of the East'", *The Muslim World* 95 (2005) 231–248, and Malieckal, "Slavery, Sex, and the Seraglio" 61.

³¹ Hakluyt Richard, *The Principall Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, George Bishop and Ralph Newberie: 1589) 281.

several other ethnicities', it is not clear whether these Tartarians are chattel.³² Nonetheless, like the Tartar girl purchased for Elizabeth's court, their voice is not heard because of their menial rank, even though these subalterns do speak!³³ Hakluyt's subsequent edition of *The Principal Navigations* in 1599 also ignores these contemporary witnesses and instead commences with narratives from thirteenth-century European missionaries who ventured to the courts of the Mongols at their height, whom they called Tartars (I: 67). Although these medieval narratives are anachronistic for the Elizabethan era, they influenced early modern English perceptions of females from the region as their ethnographic approach necessarily included them.

To start, "The voyage of *Johannes de Plano Carpini* unto the Northeast parts of the world, in the yeere of our Lord, 1246" (I: 53) records that 'their women are chaste, neither is there so much as a word uttered concerning their dishonestie' (I: 55). However, Tartar women move to the background of the discussion 'of their lawes and customes' relating to marriage (I: 55), which instead features the story of a Russian woman who was forced to marry her brother-in-law after her husband's death. Being 'incest' under her law, but not according to Tartar custom, 'she answered, that she had rather die, then to so haynously [heinously] transgresse the law', but to no avail. Carpini summarizes, 'to be short, after the death of their husbands, the Tartars wives use very seldome to marrie the second time, unless perhaps some man takes his brothers wife or his stepmother in marriage', suggesting their limited agency (I: 56).³⁴ Even so, he acknowledges instances of Tartar women's political power, as when he explains 'it is a custome among the Tartars, that the Courts of Princes or of noble men are not dissolved, but alwayes some women are appointed to keepe and governe them, upon whom certain gifts are bestowed, in like sort as they are given unto their Lords' (I: 67). On the whole, then, Carpini represents Tartar women in a range of roles and in mostly positive terms. More

³² Hellie, *Slavery in Russia* 22n32.

³³ For a theoretical exploration of this issue, see Maggio J., "'Can the Subaltern Be Heard?': Political Theory, Translation, Representation, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 32 (2007) 419–444.

³⁴ Biddulph William, *The travels of certain Englishmen into [...] Damascus, Canaan, Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Palestina, Jerusalem, Jericho, and to the Red Sea; and to sundry other places* (London, Th. Haueland for W. Aspley: 1609), similarly reports that among the Jewish populations he encountered, 'If a man die without children, the next brother taketh his wife, and raiseth up seed unto his brother' (74).

narrowly, 'The journall of frier *William de Rubruquis* a French man of the order of the *minorite friers*, unto the *East parts* of the worlde. An Dom. 1253' includes a separate chapter on 'the dueties injoined unto the *Tartarian* women, and of their labours, and also of their mariages' (I: 99), which purveys the fallacy that these women were sold into wedlock.³⁵ Significantly, Hakluyt's acolyte Samuel Purchas begins his section on the "Peregrinations and Discoveries, in the remotest North and East parts of Asia; called Tartaria and China" with the narrative by Rubruck, which is more negative than Carpini's, which he does not include.³⁶ Hence, readers of Hakluyt would receive a more balanced view of Tartar women, while readers of Purchas would get only the negative view. Wroth, writing her romance during the interim between Hakluyt and Purchas, would be more influenced by the former.³⁷

The account of Giles Fletcher, first published in 1591 and later included in Hakluyt, provides the fullest contemporary account of Tartars from an English male perspective.³⁸ In his chapter, "Of the Tartars, and other borderers to the Countrie of Russia, with whome they have most to doo in warre, and peace" (65), he mentions Tartar women primarily when describing the 'making of mariages' (70). He therefore perpetuates the narrow understanding of Tartar women, like Rubruck, rather than acknowledging their multiple roles, as does Carpini. Giles also records that 'the chiefe bootie the *Tartars* seeke for in all their warres, is to get store of captives, specially young boyes, and girls, whom they sell to the *Turkes*, or other their

³⁵ On William of Rubruck, see Campbell M.B., *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca, NY: 1988) 112–121.

³⁶ Purchas Samuel, *Purchas his Pilgrimes in Five Bookes. The Third Part* (London, W. Stansby for H. Featherstone: 1625), "The Contents of the Chapters and Paragraphs in the Second Booke of the Second Part of *Purchas His Pilgrims*." Cf. Steele C.R., "From Hakluyt to Purchas", in Quinn D.B. (ed.), *The Hakluyt Handbook*, vol. 1 (London: 1974) 74–96.

³⁷ For the period when Wroth composed the continuation of her romance, see Gossett S., "General Description of the Manuscript", in *The Second Part of the Urania* xvii–xxiii.

³⁸ Fletcher Giles, *Of the Russe common wealth. Or, Maner of government of the Russe emperour, (commonly called the Emperour of Moskovia) with the manners, and fashions of the people of that countrey* (London, Thomas Dawson for Thomas Charde: 1591). Archer J.M., *Old Worlds: Egypt, Southwest Asia, India, and Russia in Early Modern English Writing* (Stanford: 2001), describes this book as 'the central English description of Russia during the period' (110). It 'was republished in 1643 and again in 1657, when it was read as an indictment of monarchy in the eras of civil war, interregnum, and the consolidation of the American colonies' (119). It was also included in Hakluyt's collection, where it influenced writers such as John Milton (137).

neighbors' (69). Following Hellie's historical account of slavery in the region, John Michael Archer stresses that 'early modern Russia was unique among large slaveholding societies in that Russians regularly enslaved each other; slavery did not depend upon ethnic difference'. As Archer continues, 'in addition to the enslavement of Russians by each other, there was the very different matter of the Tartars' enslavement of Russians and other eastern Slavs, a trade that passed into the hands of the Ottoman Turks during the last quarter of the fifteenth century'.³⁹ Jenkinson's 'Tartar girl' therefore resonates in the gap of Giles's sixteenth-century description of slavery in the Russian empire, as the trade in young girls was bilateral.⁴⁰

Other representations of female Tartars are few in Elizabethan culture, although the equation of 'Ethiope' and 'tawny Tartar' in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (3.2.258, 264) points towards their denigration, with Tartaria to the north and Ethiopia to the south representing the traditional fonts of slavery for the Eurasian empires the English encountered in this period.⁴¹ Still, Wroth imagines the Tartar girl in her narrative as a princess, not a menial, suggesting other interpretations than Shakespeare's, which was not normative for the era.⁴² In this light, we should consider Queen Elizabeth's sartorial semiotics, which involved wearing garments of Persian and Ottoman provenance, as integral to her self-fashioning as a proto-imperialist sovereign.⁴³ Similarly, Wroth makes 'apparel after the Tartarian fashion' central to the court masque sponsored by 'the great King of Tartaria', Rodomandro (46, 42).⁴⁴ Court masques, as critics attending to the link-

³⁹ Archer, *Old Worlds* 111.

⁴⁰ Hellie, *Slavery in Russia* 74.

⁴¹ Citing *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. S. Greenblatt – W. Cohen – J.E. Howard – K.E. Maus (New York: 1997). For other representations of 'Tartary' in Shakespeare's era, see Cawley, *Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* 188–207. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia* 21, points out that 'Africa and Slavdom have been the two chief sources of slaves for a longer period of time than have any other areas'. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition* 7, makes the same point.

⁴² For more details, see Andrea, "Persia, Tartaria, and Pamphilia."

⁴³ Andrea, *Women and Islam* 28–29, 143n81. On the English 'aristocracy's flirtation with Persian dress in the later 1600s', see McJannet L., "Pirates, Merchants, and Kings: Oriental Motifs in English Court and Civic Entertainments, 1510–1659", in Ostovich H. – Silcox M.V. – Roebuck G. (eds.), *The Mysterious and the Foreign in Early Modern England* (Newark: 2008) 254.

⁴⁴ The modern edition of *The Second Part of the Urania* transcribes the erratic spellings of the manuscript; unless otherwise indicated, I have modernized spelling and punctuation in my citations from this edition.

age of race, gender, and empire in early modern cultural productions have shown, were part of England's emerging discourse of empire.⁴⁵ Given these references, Wroth's linkage of Tartaria and Persia, which we shall examine in the next section, arguably results in the elevated status of her Tartar/Persian princess even as it incorporates her into a hegemonic vision for western (Christian) imperialism.

Mary Wroth's Tartar / Persian Princess

As we have seen, the exchange of women between England and the Islamic world during the early modern period was not limited to enslaved 'wenches', but included women from elite circles, who brought with them women of lesser rank, though not necessarily slaves, in their entourages. The most salient instance involves the entourage of Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley, who accompanied her husband in his capacity as Persian 'Embassador' from the court of Shah Abbas I to the English courts of James I and Charles I during the early seventeenth century.⁴⁶ As a Circassian, her origins were Central Asian, with her aunt a member of the Persian shah's household. The Circassians, situated around the Black Sea, were traditionally Muslim, although Teresa may have come from an Eastern Orthodox background. In any case, upon marrying Robert Sherley, who had resided in Persia for almost a decade, she aligned herself with the Roman Catholicism of the Carmelite missionaries in the region, as did he. After her travels across Persia and Western Europe, she died in Rome as a Catholic, with the Carmelite chronicles recording her resistance after Robert's death to Persian men who sought to (re)convert her to Islam.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ For instance, Hall K.F., *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: 1995) 128–141; Andrea B., "Black Skin, The Queen's Masques: Africanist Ambivalence and Feminine Author(ity) in the Masques of *Blackness and Beauty*", *English Literary Renaissance* 29 (1999) 246–281; Floyd-Wilson M., *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: 2003) 111–131; and Iyengar S., *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: 2005) 80–100.

⁴⁶ Penrose, *Sherleian Odyssey* 170–171 cites Shah Abbas's letter to James I. The Sherleys were in England from 1611 to 1613, during which time Lady Sherley gave birth to their first child, named Henry after the Prince of Wales. The Sherleys returned to England in 1623 and left, for the last time, in 1627.

⁴⁷ *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, vol. 1 (London: 1939) 291–293.

Lady Sherley was represented, though more often misrepresented, in a spate of English pamphlets and stage plays during the early seventeenth century, which Mohammad Nezam-Mafi has dubbed 'Sherlian discourse'.⁴⁸ She was thus positioned, discursively and physically, at the center of early seventeenth-century England's uneasy engagement with the Safavid empire of the Persians, which was opposed to England's erstwhile allies in the Islamic world, the Ottomans. Yet, she contributed to this discourse in at least one instance as an author by filing a petition with the English Privy Council in defense of her husband. Intriguingly, she mediates a dispute over precedence between men – her husband and Naqd Ali Beg both claiming to be the Persian ambassador during the Sherleys' second trip – by arguing that the latter 'hath noe woman amongst his Trainee', and therefore should be less favored than her husband.⁴⁹ She may also have authored her husband's epitaph, having carried his remains from Persia to Rome, thereby inspiring her own, which praises her as an Amazon.⁵⁰

While Lady Sherley offers an unusually full account of a non-European woman's agency in early seventeenth-century England, the transit of English women to Persia and Persian women to England as part of her entourage has been slighted. However, the trip from London to Persia on an East India Company ship included 'Sir Robert Sherley, the Ambassadors. *Teresha*, his Ladie, a *Circasian*. Sir *Thomas Powell*. *Tomasin* his Ladie. *Leybye*, a *Persian Woman*', along with other English and Persian men.⁵¹ Other records show Powell lived with his Persian wife in Herefordshire.⁵² As Imtiaz Habib establishes in his study of *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500–1677*, women and men of African descent married into the lower ranks of English society during the early seventeenth century.⁵³ Although less visible, perhaps because Persians were generally designated as 'white', a similar dynamic was occurring with women from the Islamic empires. Moreover, 'three or four English

⁴⁸ Nezam-Mafi, "Persian Recreations" 24.

⁴⁹ Penrose, *Sherleian Odyssey* 225–226, reproduces Lady Sherley's petition.

⁵⁰ *Chronicle of the Carmelites* 290.

⁵¹ Payton Walter, "A Journall of all principall matters passed in the twelfth Voyage to the East India, observed by me Walter Payton, in the good ship the Expedition [...] Anno 1612", in Purchas Samuel, *Purchas His Pilgrimes. The first part* (London, W. Stansby for H. Featherstone: 1625) 488.

⁵² Penrose, *Sherleian Odyssey* 189.

⁵³ Habib, *Black Lives* 95–96. Habib mentions two possible Persians in England, both named 'Jehan', in the mid-seventeenth century (255).

women' accompanied the Sherleys on their return trip to Persia, after which we hear no more of them, which could mean they did not return to England.⁵⁴ As we have mentioned, after Robert's death Lady Sherley was pressured to convert to Islam, which she resisted. The account of this episode in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia* records how, when she went into hiding, her persecutors met 'a servant-maid of the Countess [Lady Sherley] going to the church, arrested her and by dint of various insults and blows succeeded in finding out where the Countess, her mistress, was'.⁵⁵ Perhaps this 'servant-maid' was one of these English women, although we cannot be sure. English transactions with Persia trailed off after the anomalous Sherley episode, not resuming until the nineteenth century, which may also explain the hitherto unnoticed assimilation of Persian women into English society and of English women into Persian society during the first two decades of the seventeenth century.⁵⁶ While Wroth does not represent these non-elite women directly, their movement across east and west is reflected in her 'principal character', Pamphilia, a princess from the southern Greek peninsula of Morea, who becomes queen of her eponymous kingdom in Asia Minor, bequeathed by her uncle, and wife to Rodomandro, King of Tartaria. By the end of the romance, she identifies with Asia as 'my husband's country and mine' (378).⁵⁷

As previously noted, Wroth was the first English woman to publish an original, as opposed to a translated, prose romance, *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, along with an original sonnet sequence. She was forced to withdraw the first part of the *Urania* from circulation shortly after its initial publication due to pressure from powerful men for whom her depictions of the patriarchal abuse of wives, daughters,

⁵⁴ Foster W. (ed.), *Early Travels in India, 1583–1619* (London: 1921) 212. Foster cites the account of Nicolas Withington, 1612–1616.

⁵⁵ *Chronicle of the Carmelites* 293.

⁵⁶ For the nineteenth-century encounters, see Nezam-Mafi, "Persian Recreations" 137–230.

⁵⁷ Roberts J., "Critical Introduction" to *The First Part of the Urania*, ed. J.A. Roberts (Binghamton, NY: 1995) xxv–xxxiii, discusses Renaissance and classical romances that may have influenced Wroth's multi-layered representations of Asia. On the classical Greek tradition of romance, see Fuchs B., *Romance* (New York: 2004) 12–36. On English Renaissance translations of Heliodorus's Greek romance, *Aethiopica*, one of Wroth's influences, see Iyengar, *Shades of Difference* 19–43 and Roberts xxxiii. On classical Greek views of Persia and their influence on Renaissance representations, see Baghal-Kar V.E.T., "Images of Persia in British Literature from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century", PhD dissertation, Bowling Green State University (1981) 7–18, 36–66.

and servants struck too close to home; however, she continued with an equally substantial second part, which remained in manuscript until its publication as a scholarly edition in 1999. She thus epitomizes the tenuous negotiation of authorship for English women during the Jacobean era. At the same time, she shows how early modern English women aligned themselves with their countrymen's imperial ambitions.⁵⁸ This dual positioning intensifies in the second part of the *Urania*, which shifts from the classical emphasis of the first part to an increasingly belligerent assertion of universalist Christian hegemony. Wroth here constructs an imaginary realm encompassing 'East' (Asia) and 'West' (Europe) under the auspices of an equally imaginary Holy Roman Empire, which in her era was a 'phantom' of 'a universal imperialist hope' for Western Europeans and not a political reality.⁵⁹

It is therefore significant that the first mention of Persians in the *Urania* is coupled immediately with Tartaria when a forlorn lady identifies herself as 'daughter to the King of Tartaria; my mother was a Persian' (9). This character is described through the 'black, but beautiful' formula associated with other Central Asians: 'her hair brown, but [...] her eyes black, but [...]' (7).⁶⁰ Yet the story establishing her identity is immediately dismissed as 'a dreame' and 'but a fiction' (10). Further discredited, this imposter is identified as a malevolent spirit who has sexually ensnared one of the narrative's chivalric heroes (10, 303–305, 397). The ambivalent religious and racial identities Wroth ascribes to this character have been shown to correspond to that of Lady Sherley,⁶¹ who was described by English observers as having 'more of *Ebony*, then *Ivory*, in her Complexion, yet amiable enough, and very valiant, a quality considerable in that Sex, in those Countries'.⁶² However, given the resonance of Jenkinson's 'Tartar girl' from the late Elizabethan era onwards, her genealogy may be more complex than this link to 'Sherleain discourse' suggests. At the very least,

⁵⁸ Andrea, *Women and Islam* 30–36.

⁵⁹ Yates F.A., *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: 1975) 1.

⁶⁰ On this formula as it applies to African characters in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English literature, see Hall, *Things of Darkness* 107–116, and Iyengar, *Shades of Difference* 44–79. For the formula as it applies to Rodomandro, see Andrea, "Persia, Tartaria, and Pamphilia."

⁶¹ Andrea B., "Lady Sherley: The 'First' Persian in England?", *The Muslim World* 95 (2005) 279–295.

⁶² Fuller Thomas, *The History of the Worthies of England* (London, J.G.W.L. and W.G. for Thomas Williams: 1662) 107. This is in the section on 'Sussex', which is separately paginated.

Wroth's evocation of a Tartar/Persian princess recuperates the representation of the former from Shakespeare's denigrating connotations and points towards her potential destination in Elizabeth's court, albeit as an accoutrement of empire.

Importantly, this discourse of empire needs to be set not merely in the transatlantic context, which did not dominate English efforts until the later seventeenth century, but also in the context of 'the web of empire' from earlier in the century, when England remained subordinate to more established empires such as the Ottomans and Safavids. Accordingly, the next episode featuring 'the true Sophia of Persia', whom we learn is Lindafillia, 'the rarest creature the earth then held', pits her against her uncle, the 'usurping Sophy of Persia' (54).⁶³ This dichotomy transforms the European misnomer for the Safavid shah (Sophy, from the Sufi tradition upon which the Safavids based their claims) into a Christian term (Sophia, from the Byzantine tradition, which resonates with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, renamed Istanbul, and their conversion of the Byzantine imperial church, Hagia Sophia, into a mosque). Moreover, this episode comes nearest to naming Islam as the enemy, when 'a giant, and the fiercest and cruellest esteemed of any in all those parts, called Limorando', upon capturing the ship carrying Lindafillia, 'thought it against his own religion to hold faith with infidels, as he termed Christians' and 'resolved to satisfy himself in his baser desires' (54). The profusion of orientalist and other exotic stereotypes characterizing this episode – Italian pirates (54), Turkish swords (55–56), and Persian giants (57) – marks a noticeable shift in the romance.

Concomitantly, the references to Christianity multiply as indices of this struggle, which comes to a head when 'the King of Natolia' (72) attempts to join with the 'brave Tartarians' against the Moreans (73). Natolia, or Anatolia, was under Ottoman rule in Wroth's era, although

⁶³ Although conformity to actuality is not required by the romance genre, in the Safavid and other Islamic empires of the era succession was through collateral males, on which see Peirce, *Imperial Harem* 79–86; Hambly, "Becoming Visible" 12–18; and Szuppe M., "The 'Jewels of Wonder': Learned Ladies and Princess Politicians in the Provinces of Early Safavid Iran", in Hambly G.R.G. (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* (New York: 1998) 325–347. A similar situation pertained in France, where the application of the Salic Law barred women from ruling in their own name, although a number of mothers ruled as regents. This contrasts with England where a woman could rise through the line of succession based on primogeniture, as was the case for Elizabeth. For details, see Jansen S.L., *The Monstrous Regiment of Women: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (New York: 2002) 181–222.

this referent remains ‘under erasure’ in her romance.⁶⁴ The Tartarians choose to ally with the Moreans, ‘having understood of their king’s safety and the glorious entertainment he had received in the Morean Court so lately’ (73), which evokes an earlier episode with Rodomandro even as it effaces its ambivalence.⁶⁵ The Tartarians also base their decision on ‘the hope of the alliance with the Moreans by the marriage between Pamphilia and the king’ (73), which highlights Rodomandro’s indispensability, and thus his assimilability, to the union of East and West under a universalistic Christian empire. Nonetheless, the episode immediately following, with the reprise of ‘the King of Tartaria’s sister’ (76), shows that such ‘intercultural relationships’ are less stable than they may seem.⁶⁶

This rejection by no means privileges the western prince, Licandro, as it is the King of Tartaria’s sister who abruptly refuses his proposal when ‘he kissed her hand, but so fervently as if his lips would have dwelt there’ (77).⁶⁷ The narrator reports that this princess, ‘never used to such moist salutes, took her hand away, somewhat more near snatching than courteous taking it, and with a frown, able (from such heavenlike beauty) to kill than please, turned away, which made a bashful blush rise in the prince’ (78). While the narrator suggests this eastern princess lacks courtesy, her questioning of Licandro’s worthiness as a result of his ignorance of eastern norms shows that cultural relationships between Asians and Europeans do not necessarily favor the latter. The episode ends with Licandro learning through his friend’s dream that ‘this lady is not for you’ (80), after which the princess proceeds ‘towards Tartaria’ to rejoin her brother, Rodomandro, who is returning homeward after having escorted Pamphilia to her kingdom in Asia Minor (81, 84). When the king of Tartaria next appears in the romance, it is to pledge the support of ‘this Christned [*sic*] world’ – both already Christian and to be made Christian – ‘to succor the delicate, distressed

⁶⁴ Andrea, *Women and Islam* 36–42.

⁶⁵ For an analysis of this episode, see Andrea, “Persia, Tartaria, and Pamphilia”.

⁶⁶ Cavanagh S.T., “Prisoners of Love: Cross-Cultural and Supernatural Desires in Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania*”, in Relihan C.C. – Stanivukovic G.V. (eds.), *Prose Fiction and Early Modern Sexualities in England, 1570–1640* (New York: 2003) 97.

⁶⁷ For similar *faux pas* by seventeenth-century Englishmen in the Mughal court, including the ambassador Sir Thomas Roe, see Barbour, *Before Orientalism* 115–193. Also see Brummett P., “A Kiss is Just a Kiss: Rituals of Submission Along the East-West Divide”, in Birchwood M. – Dimmock M. (eds.), *Cultural Encounters Between East and West, 1453–1699* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: 2005) 107–131.

princess, rightful Sophie of Persia' (115–116). As he adds, 'for I hear certainly all the west has resolved to succor her. Then we of the east joining, what shall hinder us to obtain a whole and happy victory?' (116). The marital bond of Pamphilia and Rodomandro cements this political union under the banner of Christian expansionism. At the same time, the 'usurping Sophy of Persia' becomes even more hateful as he seeks to marry his niece, which enables another attack on his character: 'This beast we last spoke of, the usurping Sophy, who lately has an intent to marry her, being his natural niece, which is as hateful for her to think on as his life is to all true and hearty Christians' (156). Strikingly, at this point the 'true Sophia', a Persian princess, is confused with Pamphilia, who previously was subject to a threat of marriage from the 'usurping Sophy' (108), made immediately after her marriage to Rodomandro. The boundaries of east and west thus become increasingly permeable in the romance.

The final appearance of the Tartar/Persian princess occurs after the marriage of Rodomandro, who is introduced as 'an exquisite man in all things, and a Christian' (46), and Pamphilia, who by the end of the romance is lauded as 'the eastern star' (417). This union, towards which most of the romance tends, ensures (Western) Christian hegemony over Eurasia. As 'the innocently wronged Sophie of Persia' (165) surfaces from her imprisonment, the plot accelerates towards the complete incorporation of Central Asia into this ultimately western-dominated empire. In an encounter anticipating a Christianized Persian court, for which Western Europeans hoped from the medieval through the early modern period,⁶⁸ Pamphilia's brother, Rosindy, while traipsing through Asia, happens upon 'a most, most sumptuous court' (167), graced by 'the excellent lady, such a piece of perfect perfections as could not be equaled on earth, much less to be thought on of being surpassed' (167–168). The lady 'sat in a throne of pure Gold', her crown adorned with 'the purest pearl the Orient could afford' (168). Signifying wealth, magnificence, and luxury in a form amenable to the western male conqueror, she represents the positive pole in the bifurcated view of Persia in early modern Europe.⁶⁹ As for her person, this lady epitomizes the increasingly contradictory standard of black

⁶⁸ Knobler A., "Pseudo-Conversions and Patchwork Pedigrees: The Christianization of Muslim Princes and the Diplomacy of Holy War", *Journal of World History* 7 (1996) 181–197.

⁶⁹ Baghal-Kar V.E.T., "Images of Persia" 40.

beauty in early modern England, with her hair shining 'yet butt as gold upon black' and 'her apparel of the Asian fashion' provoking awe (168). But it is the surprise of her snow-white skin that instigates the following encomium:

O what? The milky way was dirt to that! The snow on the mountain tops, the black sea to it! What was it, then? The perfect figure of the most immaculate soul, shining in her skin. Skin? O such a skin as would make a thousand Jasons mad on travail⁷⁰ but to see, though not to touch so precious a fleece! Such, O such was and is her skin, the perfectest of mortal creatures. (168)

This excessive, albeit ambivalent, praise hinges on an analogy already associated with Lady Sherley: the archetypal imperial interloper, Jason, whose mention evokes the orientalized Medea.⁷¹ All these elements inform the 'true' Sophy's tale of her disinheritance, the subsequent incestuous overtures of her uncle, and her final resolve 'to demand aid of all Christian princes (I being a Christian myself) to assist me and deliver me out of the hands of such wickedness and treachery' (170). After this appeal, which delivers her kingdom to western control, this Tartar/Persian princess retreats from an active role in the romance.

How then does the multiply subaltern Tartar girl, whose life is registered as a marginal note in the accounts of early English voyages through Central Asia, relate to Wroth's Tartar/Persian princess? To start, her resonance in early modern English representations of Tartars, who were 'insiders'/'outsiders' in the Russian and Persian empires,⁷² points towards English subalternity in the global 'web of empire'. As Richard Hakluyt, deemed the architect of the discursive basis for England's later imperial achievements, underscores, the English, as 'sluggish' aspirants to empire, had no choice but to turn northwards due to the Iberian monopoly over the riches of the West and East Indies.⁷³ While this Tartar girl was purchased as a slave by Anthony Jenkinson to be presented to Queen Elizabeth, he himself was not in a position of imperial mastery, but was thrown out of the court of the Persian shah as an infidel, which brought other indignities and dangers. Yet, unlike Lady Sherley, whose presence in Eng-

⁷⁰ 'Travail' in early modern usage means 'journeying, a journey' (as in travel), as well as 'bodily or mental labour or toil' (OED).

⁷¹ Andrea, *Women and Islam* 46, 51.

⁷² Hellie, *Slavery in Russia* 370.

⁷³ Hakluyt, "The Epistle Dedication", *Principall Navigations* (1589) sig. *2.

land spawned an extensive discourse informing Wroth's representation of Persians, this Tartar girl resonates in the literature of the era as an absent presence. A possible reference surfaces in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which emphasizes the negative portrayal of Tartars in the documentary record. Otherwise, she remains muted in the discursive sources from the era. But she is not completely absent, as her existence was registered, if only through a marginal note. It is extremely plausible that Wroth encountered the fleeting presence of the Tartar girl in the records of Jenkinson's voyage, which were not only reproduced in Hakluyt, but were part of her family's legacy, with her grandfather, Henry Sidney, an early sponsor of these voyages.⁷⁴ In the *Urania*, as we have seen, the Tartar/Persian princess increasingly leans towards the latter lineage, with the former identification as a Tartar mired in the suggestion it was 'but a fiction' (10). Nonetheless, these traces point towards a methodology that combines the 'necessary suspension of disbelief' associated with fiction with the evidence available in the discursive record.⁷⁵ The 'Tartar girl' persists as the necessary supplement – simultaneously marginal and constitutive – in our investigations of early modern women's authorship.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ For Henry Sidney's speech to the newly constituted Muscovy Company, see Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* (1589) 281.

⁷⁵ Hendricks, "Feminist Historiography" 367.

⁷⁶ Derrida J., *Of Grammatology*, trans. G.C. Spivak (Baltimore: 1974) 144–145, 154 ('The supplement is maddening because it is neither presence nor absence').



Fig. 1. Map of Tartaria from Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (Antwerp, Aegidius Coppenius Diesth: 1570). The title of the map reads, 'RVSSIAE MOSCOVIAE ET TARTARIAE DESCRIPTIO. Auctore Antonio Ienkensono Anglo, edita Londini. Anno 1562' [...]. ('Image of Russia, Moscovia and Tartaria by Anthony Jenkinson, Englishman, published in London, 1562' [...]). Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Selective Bibliography

- ANDREA B., "Persia, Tartaria, and Pamphilia: Ideas of Asia in Mary Wroth's *Urania*", in Lim W.S.H. – Johanyak D. (eds.), *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia* (New York: 2010).
- , *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: 2007).
- , "Travels Through 'Islam' in Early Modern English Studies", *Clio: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History* 35 (2006) 225–243.
- , "Lady Sherley: The 'First' Persian in England?", *The Muslim World* 95 (2005) 279–295.
- , "Black Skin, The Queen's Masques: Africanist Ambivalence and Feminine Author(ity) in the Masques of *Blackness and Beauty*", *English Literary Renaissance* 29 (1999) 246–281.
- ARCHER J.M., *Old Worlds: Egypt, Southwest Asia, India, and Russia in Early Modern English Writing* (Stanford: 2001).
- ARNOLD J., *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds: 1988).
- BABAYAN K., "The 'Aqa'id Al-Nisa': A Glimpse at Safavid Women in Local Isfahani Culture", in Hambly G.R.G. (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* (New York: 1998) 349–381.
- BAGHAL-KAR V.E.T., "Images of Persia in British Literature from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century", PhD dissertation, Bowling Green State University (1981).
- BARBOUR R., *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (Cambridge: 2003).
- BIDDULPH WILLIAM., *The travels of certain Englishmen into [...] Damascus, Canaan, Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Palestina, Jerusalem, Jericho, and to the Red Sea; and to sundry other places* (London, Th. Haueland for W. Aspley: 1609).
- BRUMMETT P., "A Kiss is Just a Kiss: Rituals of Submission Along the East-West Divide", in Birchwood M. – Dimmock M. (eds.), *Cultural Encounters Between East and West, 1453–1699* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: 2005) 107–131.
- BURTON J., "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000) 125–156.
- CAMPBELL M.B., *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca: 1988).
- CAVANAGH S.T., "Prisoners of Love: Cross-Cultural and Supernatural Desires in Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*", in Relihan C.C. – Stanivukovic G.V. (eds.), *Prose Fiction and Early Modern Sexualities in England, 1570–1640* (New York: 2003) 93–110.
- CAWLEY R.R., *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* (Boston: 1938).
- Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, vol. 1 (London: 1939).
- DERRIDA J., *Of Grammatology*, trans. G.C. Spivak (Baltimore: 1974).
- ELIZABETH I, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, eds. L.S. Marcus – J. Mueller – M.B. Rose (Chicago: 2000).
- , *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. G.B. Harrison (New York: 1968).
- EZELL M.J.M., "Women and Writing", in Pacheco A. (ed.), *A Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: 2002) 77–94.
- , *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: 1993).
- FERGUSON M.W., "Renaissance Concepts of the 'Woman Writer'", in Wilcox H. (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700* (Cambridge: 1996) 143–168.
- FLETCHER GILES, *Of the Russe common wealth. Or, Maner of gouvernement of the Russe emperour, (commonly called the Emperour of Moskovia) with the manners, and fashions of the people of that countrey* (London, Thomas Dawson for Thomas Charde: 1591).
- FLOYD-WILSON M., *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: 2003).

- FOSTER W. (ed.), *Early Travels in India, 1583–1619* (London: 1921).
- FOSTER W., *England's Quest of Eastern Trade* (1933) (New York: 1967).
- FUCHS B., *Romance* (New York: 2004).
- FULLER THOMAS, *The History of the Worthies of England* (London, J.G.W.L. and W.G. for Thomas Williams: 1662).
- GAMES A., *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (Oxford: 2008).
- GOFFMAN D., *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660* (Seattle: 1998).
- GOLDBERG J., *Desiring Women Writing: English Renaissance Examples* (Stanford: 1997).
- GUHA R. – SPIVAK G.S. (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: 1998).
- HABIB I., *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500–1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (Aldershot: 2008).
- HAKLUYT RICHARD, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, George Bishop, Ralph Newberic, and Robert Barker: 1599).
- , *The Principall Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, George Bishop and Ralph Newberic: 1589).
- HALL K.F., *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: 1995).
- HAMBLY G.R.G., “Becoming Visible: Medieval Islamic Women in Historiography and History”, in Hambly G.R.G. (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* (New York: 1998) 3–27.
- HELLIE R., *Slavery in Russia, 1450–1725* (Chicago: 1982).
- HENDRICKS M., “Feminist Historiography”, in Pacheco A. (ed.), *A Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: 2002) 361–376.
- IYENGAR S., *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: 2005).
- JANSEN S.L., *The Monstrous Regiment of Women: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (New York: 2002).
- KNOBLER A., “Pseudo-Conversions and Patchwork Pedigrees: The Christianization of Muslim Princes and the Diplomacy of Holy War”, *Journal of World History* 7 (1996) 181–197.
- LEVIN C., *‘The Heart and Stomach of a King’: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: 1994).
- LEWALSKI B.K., *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: 1993).
- MAGGIO J., “‘Can the Subaltern Be Heard?': Political Theory, Translation, Representation, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak”, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 32 (2007) 419–444.
- MALIECKAL B., “Slavery, Sex, and the Seraglio: ‘Turkish’ Women and Early Modern Texts”, in Ostovich H. – Silcox M.V. – Roebuck G. (eds.), *The Mysterious and the Foreign in Early Modern England* (Newark: 2008) 58–73.
- MARKLEY R., “Riches, Power, Trade and Religion: The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600–1720”, *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003) 494–516.
- MATAR N., *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: 1999).
- , *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: 1998).
- MCJANNET L., “Pirates, Merchants, and Kings: Oriental Motifs in English Court and Civic Entertainments, 1510–1659”, in Ostovich H. – Silcox M.V. – Roebuck G. (eds.), *The Mysterious and the Foreign in Early Modern England* (Newark: 2008) 249–265.
- MORGAN E.D. – COOTE C.H. (eds.), *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and Other Englishmen* (London: 1886).
- MORTON M.B.G., *The Jenkinson Story* (Glasgow: 1962).
- MUIR E. – RUGGIERO G. (eds.), *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe: Selections from Quaderni Storici* (Baltimore: 1991).
- NEZAM-MAFI M.T., “Persian Recreations: Theatricality in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic History, 1599–1828”, PhD dissertation, Boston University (1999).

- PAYTON WALTER, *A Journall of all principall matters passed in the twelfth Voyage to the East India, observed by me Walter Payton, in the good ship the Expedition* [...] Anno 1612, in Purchas S., *Purchas His Pilgrimes. The first part* (London, W. Stansby for H. Featherstone: 1625).
- PEIRCE L.P., *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley: 2003).
- , *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: 1993).
- PENROSE B., *The Sherleian Odyssey* (London: 1938).
- PURCHAS SAMUEL, *Purchas His Pilgrimes* [...] *The Third Part* (London, W. Stansby for H. Featherstone: 1625).
- SHAKESPEARE W., *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. S. Greenblatt – W. Cohen – J.E. Howard – K.E. Maus (New York: 1997).
- STEELE C.R., “From Hakluyt to Purchas”, in Quinn D.B. (ed.), *The Hakluyt Handbook*, vol. 1 (London: 1974) 74–96.
- SZUPPE M., “The ‘Jewels of Wonder’: Learned Ladies and Princess Politicians in the Provinces of Early Safavid Iran”, in Hambly G.R.G. (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* (New York: 1998) 325–347.
- THYS-ŞENOCAK L., *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Aldershot: 2006).
- TOLEDANO E.R., *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: 1998).
- WARNICKE R.M., *Women of The English Renaissance and Reformation* (Westport, Conn.: 1983).
- WILLAN T.S., *The Early History of the Russia Company, 1553–1603* (Manchester: 1956).
- WROTH M., *The Second Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. J.A. Roberts – S. Gossett – J. Mueller (Tempe: 1999).
- , *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. J.A. Roberts (Binghamton, NY: 1995).
- , *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* (Baton Rouge: 1983).
- YATES F.A., *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: 1975).
- YERMOLENKO G., “Roxolana: ‘The Greatest Empresse of the East’”, *The Muslim World* 95 (2005) 231–248.

A CLOISTERED NUN ABROAD:
ARCANGELA TARABOTTI'S
INTERNATIONAL LITERARY CAREER

Lynn Lara Westwater

In 1650, the strictly cloistered Venetian nun Arcangela Tarabotti (1604–1652) sent a letter to the French chargé d'affaires at Venice, Louis Matharel, along with an unnamed work which she asked him to help publish in France.¹ With this letter, published soon thereafter, Tarabotti makes one of her last public references – oblique but unmistakable – to a work she had been seeking to put to press for at least the better part of a decade: her *Tirannia paterna* (Paternal Tyranny), in which the nun makes her most powerful case against the forced enclosure in convents of girls who lacked a religious vocation. Compelling girls to enter the convent was, as Tarabotti often said, a form of imprisonment. Nuns – willing or not – were forbidden after the profession of vows from leaving the convent and tightly restricted within it, forced to communicate even with relatives across the convent grate. Tarabotti herself was a victim of a coerced vocation; the socially expedient practice, rife in seventeenth-century Venice, helped patrician and citizen families to maintain wealth and prestige.² Tarabotti entered the Sant'Anna convent – in an insalubrious spot on the outskirts of Venice – at the age of thirteen, and though she professed and was consecrated

¹ Matharel was stationed at Venice from February 1648 until November 1651 (Bittner L. Gross L., *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648)* (Oldenburg I.O. – Berlin: 1976 (1936)) I 244). The letters in Tarabotti's collection, *Lettere familiari e di complimento* (Venice: li Guerigli 1650), are undated. The dating of this letter was first offered by Zanette E., *Suor Arcangela, monaca del seicento veneziano* (Rome – Venice: 1960) 431.

² On the issue of forced monachization, see inter alia Zarri G., "Monasteri femminili e città (Secoli XV–XVIII)", in Chittolini G. – G. Miccoli (eds.), *Storia d'Italia. La chiesa e il potere politico dal medioevo all'età contemporanea* (Turin: 1986); Zarri G., *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: 2000); Medioli F., "Le Monacazioni forzate: Donne ribelli al proprio destino", *Clio: Rivista trimestrale di studi storici* 30, 3 (1994) 431–454; Sperling J.G., *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: 1999); Laven M., *Virgins of Venice: Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (London: 2002).

as a nun, she never resigned herself to the perpetual enclosure that her religious life imposed.³ She made it her life's work to protest this injustice.

She undertook this task as a young woman by composing *Paternal Tyranny*.⁴ The work revealed the economic and political forces that stood behind the practice of forced monachization and attacked the secular and religious powers that allowed such a wrong. Tarabotti originally prefaced the *Tyranny* with a sarcastic dedication to the Venetian Republic that called the tract 'a gift that well suits a Republic that practices the abuse of forcing more young girls to take the veil than anywhere else in the world' and inveighed against the Republic for 'degrading, deceiving, and denying liberty to its own young girls and women'.⁵ She eventually eliminated this dedication, instead dedicating it to God.⁶ Tarabotti sought until the end of her life to put the work to press, but the text's unabashedly polemic stance thwarted its publication. Repeatedly frustrated in her attempts to see the work printed, Tarabotti sought throughout the 1640s to publish it further and further from Venice, eventually seeking, through several different schemes, to bring it to press in France. The work was only published posthumously, and in Holland and Venice rather than France.

By the time of this posthumous publication, Tarabotti's literary reputation had already been secured by the five works she put to press in her lifetime, which unequivocally asserted female superiority and decried men's mistreatment of women. Her published works were: *Paradiso monacale* (Convent Paradise, 1643), a celebration of the joys of the convent for nuns with a vocation; *Antisatira* (Antisatire, 1644), a controversial defense of women's right to luxury; *Lettere familiari e di complimento* (Letters, 1650), a 256-letter collection which attests to the nun's wide-ranging literary network, provides her most systematic attempt to shape her literary reputation, and shows her advocacy for

³ An essential point of reference on Tarabotti is the biography by Zanette, *Suor Arcangela*, as are the modern editions of Tarabotti's works, cited in note 7. See also the recent volume of essays edited by Weaver E., *Arcangela Tarabotti: A Literary Nun in Baroque Venice* (Ravenna: 2006).

⁴ Zanette speculates that she started composing the work in the early 1620s (*Suor Arcangela* 90). On the issue, see also Medioli F., "Chiave Di Lettura", in *L'Inferno monacale di Arcangela Tarabotti*, ed. F. Medioli (Turin: 1990) 152–159. Tarabotti calls it her first work (see Tarabotti A., *L'Inferno monacale*, ed. F. Medioli (Turin: 1990) 27).

⁵ Tarabotti A., *Paternal Tyranny*, ed. and trans. L. Panizza (Chicago: 2004) 37–38.

⁶ The dedication of the *Tyranny* to the Republic has survived since it was included at the beginning of the extant manuscript of *Convent Hell*.

women in everyday matters; *Le Lagrime D'Arcangela Tarabotti* (Arcangela Tarabotti's Tears, 1650), a personal work in honor of a deceased friend; and *Che le donne siano della spetie degli uomini. Difesa delle donne* (That Women are of the Human Race. Defense of Women, 1651), a response to misogynist tract issued in Latin and then Italian that denied that women had souls. The nun's association with the Venetian Accademia degli Incogniti, the most powerful literary academy in seventeenth-century Italy, also enhanced her reputation and, at a practical level, provided her otherwise unimaginable access to literary currents and to the presses. Her reputation was also bolstered by her manuscript circulation and – through the *Letters* – promotion of her *Paternal Tyranny* and her *Inferno monacale* (Convent Hell). While Tarabotti doggedly sought the *Tyranny*'s publication, she seems not even to have attempted publication of the *Inferno*, her most scandalous work, which depicted rampant sin in convents filled with unwilling nuns; it remained unpublished until modern times.⁷

But Tarabotti seems never to have resigned herself to leaving the *Tyranny* unpublished; printing the work – to publicize the injustice of forced monachization and to establish herself as its principal detractor – became in fact a central focus of the last decade of her life, when she rose to literary prominence. Tarabotti's *Letters* – printed a little over a year before her death – showcase her efforts to publish the work in at least a half-dozen separate attempts. In this essay, I will examine Tarabotti's publication efforts as documented in her *Letters* and the ever-widening geographic arc these attempts traced. The international literary network the nun established and exploited in these efforts never provided the nun the satisfaction she desired, though her wide-ranging geographic contacts gave the nun a forum to disseminate her ideas and added luster to her reputation even as the *Tyranny* remained unpublished. Moreover, it was likely through this same network that the *Tyranny* came to press in Holland two years after the nun's death, under the pseudonym Galerana Baratotti and the title *La semplicità ingannata*

⁷ Several of Tarabotti's works are available in modern editions. See (in order of publication): *L'Inferno monacale' di Arcangela Tarabotti*, ed. F. Medioli (Turin: 1990); *Che le donne siano della spezie degli uomini: Difesa della donna (1651)*, ed. L. Panizza (London: 1994); *Satira e Antisatira*, ed. E. Weaver (Rome: 1998); 'Women are not Human': *An Anonymous Treatise and its Responses*, ed. T. Kenney (New York: 1998); *Paternal Tyranny*, ed. and trans. L. Panizza (Chicago: 2004); *Lettere familiari e di complimento*, ed. M. Ray – L. Westwater (Turin: 2005); and *La semplicità ingannata*, ed. S. Bortot (Padua: 2007).

(Innocence Deceived).⁸ This 1654 publication – whose circumstances remain shrouded in mystery – is postscript to the material of this essay. Postscript also is the *Semplicità*'s 1661 condemnation to the *Index of Forbidden Books*, a condemnation that certainly explains, however, the difficulties Tarabotti encountered in trying to publish the work.⁹

Tarabotti's *Letters* provide invaluable information on the nun's efforts to publish the *Tyranny* and on the international network she established to fulfill this objective, but they have certain limitations. The first is temporal: since they were published sixteen months before the nun's death,¹⁰ they end mid-story; the letter to Matharel mentioned above, for instance, marked a new publication attempt whose outcome the *Letters* do not reveal; nor do they tell whether Tarabotti undertook other efforts. Second, it is not certain that all of the letters in Tarabotti's collection were sent, or sent exactly as they appeared in the printed volume, even though the survival of some of her manuscript letters prove her epistolary relations with certain addressees and correspond to some of the published missives.¹¹ Tarabotti's representation

⁸ (Leiden, G. Sambix: 1654). There are two separate editions which carry this same publication information, one published by the Elsevier brothers in Holland and the other likely published in Venice. On the issue, see Panizza L., "Note on the Text", in Tarabotti A., *Paternal Tyranny*, ed. L. Panizza (Chicago: 2004) and Bortot S., "Nota Al Testo", in Tarabotti A., *La semplicità ingannata*, ed. S. Bortot (Padua: 2007). It may be that Tarabotti's 1651 *Che le donne siano* also came out abroad, another possible indication of the strength of Tarabotti's international network; the title page indicates that the volume was published in Nuremberg, but Zanette says this typographical information is false (*Suor Arcangela* 411).

⁹ The Church began to move against the book in 1654. The official censure of the book to the Congregation of the Index was issued in 1659, and contended that the author misread Scripture, reflected Luther's opinions on women's roles, and even denied the human nature of Christ. The Congregation decided to ban the book with no discussion in 1660; a decree was signed on July 4 1661. See Costa-Zalessow N., "Tarabotti's *La semplicità ingannata* and its Twentieth-Century Interpreters, with Unpublished Documents Regarding its Condemnation to the Index", *Italica* 78, 3 (2001) 314–25.

¹⁰ The letters were published in October 1650 (Zanette, *Suor Arcangela* 437); Tarabotti died in February 1652.

¹¹ See Medioli F., "Alcune lettere autografe di Arcangela Tarabotti: Autocensura e immagine di sé", *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* XXXII, 1 (1996); Rubeis F.D., "La scrittura forzata. Le lettere autografe di Arcangela Tarabotti", *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* XXXII, 1 (1996) and Medioli F., "Arcangela Tarabotti's Reliability About Herself: Publication and Self-Representation (Together with a Small Collection of Previously Unpublished Letters)", *Italianist* 23 (2003). In addition, the letters of Tarabotti's patron Giovan Francesco Loredan demonstrate an active epistolary exchange between the writers (Loredano Giovanni Francesco, *Lettere* (Venice, li Guercigli: 1660).

of these epistolary exchanges in her printed volume are in any case revealing. In fact, Tarabotti seems to have waged her battle to promote the *Tyranny* at two levels – with her individual correspondents, whom she asked for concrete help to bring her book to press, and with a broader lettered audience to whom she appealed in her letter collection. Through her collection she also sought to shape these readers' perceptions of, and to whet their appetite for, the *Tyranny* even as her hopes that this broader public would have access to the printed work continued to be frustrated.

Tarabotti's example – in which such severe constraint intermixes with a stark freedom of expression, intellectual but also geographic – is singular among early modern European women writers. While the early modern period was richly populated by nuns who achieved a remarkable cultural level and wrote prolifically – a success possible also because nuns in general enjoyed a freedom from the domestic concerns that consumed much of the energy and time of laywomen – women religious with very few exceptions penned spiritual works or historical ones that focused on their convents or prominent members.¹² The variety and forcefulness of Tarabotti's secular, protofeminist and decidedly polemic works – which she never renounced – stand in sharp contrast to those of other nuns on the European stage.¹³ The piquancy of her subject matter – the scandalous situation in strictly cloistered convents, with state complicity, for instance, or her contention that God preferred women to men – as well as the cogency of her political analysis, also set Tarabotti apart. Moreover – and most pertinent for this volume on transnational women's writing – Tarabotti's construction, from her strictly cloistered position, of a literary network that ranged the diverse states of the northern Italian peninsula and into Northern Europe and that she used to advance her secular agenda, is without parallel in early modern Europe. This exceptionality – an

¹² For a helpful overview of the writing of early modern nuns, see Evangelisti S., *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450–1700* (Oxford: 2007), and in particular “Voices from the Cloister” 67–98.

¹³ The two nuns who might display the greatest similarities to Tarabotti are the Spanish nun Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) and the Mexican nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–1695). But Teresa's forceful and original writings, which were also widely circulated, did not stray from spiritual concerns. Sor Juana, who also articulated controversial and feminist positions in a variety of widely circulated works, distinguished herself from Tarabotti in several ways: distant from, if still connected to, the European context, she chose to become a nun, lived under much less strict confinement, and ended up renouncing her intellectual life.

exceptionality the nun insisted upon even as she described her destiny as common – was the product of a fortuitous confluence of at least three factors. First, during the years of her most intense publishing efforts, Tarabotti enjoyed the advantages of the Venetian Republic's independence from Rome, which created a relatively free intellectual atmosphere. Next, she benefited from the fact that the Accademia degli Incogniti, to which she was closely bound through intense (and often tense) relations with several of its members, reached its apex in these very same years. And last, she was aided by the French community – to which she was tied by common interests and geniality – whose movements back and forth from France, as we will see, allowed her texts their most dramatic and sustained movement as well. These circumstances favored but did not create Tarabotti's success, which she built with perspicacity, daring and persistence from an extremely marginalized position.

Despite the nun's exceptionality, Tarabotti's case raises interesting general questions about transnational literary activity by women in the early modern period. What are the implications of the movement of female-authored texts versus the confinement of their authors? What were the possible dangers of publishing abroad for female authors? What were the advantages? What were the different implications of manuscript circulation versus print publication for a female author in a transnational dimension? What sorts of notions of cultural difference guided international publication efforts? In this essay, I will trace the publication history of the *Tyranny*, as presented in her *Letters*, before turning to these more general questions.

Manuscript Circulation and Publication Attempts in Venice

Tarabotti's *Letters*, which are undated and lack a chronological or thematic order, recount in a fragmented manner the nun's numerous efforts to disseminate her *Tyranny*. This lack of clear order – almost certainly determined by Tarabotti herself¹⁴ – may have been the nun's attempt to veil certain controversial discussions, including those regard-

¹⁴ The letter collection shows Tarabotti's involvement with the *Letters*' publication (see for example let. 148) and her close attention to the details of her other works' printing.

ing the *Tyranny*, to avoid trouble with secular and religious authorities. Nevertheless, an attentive and knowledgeable reader would have been able to reconstruct in a temporally and thematically coherent fashion the tales that Tarabotti metes out across the letter collection. Such reconstruction would begin with Tarabotti's extensive manuscript circulation of the work, a circulation that likely preceded any of her attempts to put the work to press and probably continued hand in hand with these efforts. In this early phase, the *Letters* show Tarabotti shared the manuscript only with trusted friends and emphasized the parsimony with which she loaned the text.¹⁵ By tightly controlling the manuscript's circulation, Tarabotti probably hoped to avoid not only the problems with censors that an uncontrolled release might have caused but also the possibility that the work would be plagiarized before she could put it to press. But even her close control of the manuscript did not allow her to avoid this latter pitfall. In a letter included in the collection, the nun in fact accused a close literary friend of stealing the *Tyranny*'s ideas. She wrote:

I am stunned that Your Lordship declares to have spoken in your work on the topic of coerced nuns while, having seen my work, you were obliged not to speak of something so thoroughly discussed by me. If Paternal Tyranny had not been read by worthy gentlemen before it came before your eyes, I confess that I would be greatly pained by such a metamorphosis.¹⁶

Tarabotti's rebuke makes clear that, if the circulation of the manuscript rendered it vulnerable to plagiarism, it was also, in absence of publication, essential to her efforts to defend the originality of her ideas: her manuscript had circulated enough to be able to prove her literary honesty. By this affirmation, the nun claimed a sort of scribal publica-

¹⁵ See for example let. 2 and let. 190.

¹⁶ 'Stupisco bene che Vostra Signoria si dichiari d'aver parlato nell'opere Sue sopra la materia delle monache forzate mentre, avendo Egli veduto l'opera mia, era obligato non parlare di cosa tanto diffusamente da me trattata. Se la *Tirannia paterna* non fosse stata trascorsa da cavalieri degni prima che capitasse sotto gli occhi di Lei, confesso che di tali metamorfosi ne sentirei gran dolore'. (Tarabotti A., *Lettere familiari e di complimento*, ed. M. Ray – L. Westwater (Turin: 2005) let. 231, 277–278). All of the translations of the *Lettere familiari* are from a draft of the forthcoming edition of Tarabotti A., *Letters*, ed. M. Ray – L. Westwater, to be published by the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies (CRRS) at the University of Toronto as part of the Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Series. (Other translations in this article are mine except as noted.).

tion for her work and the legitimacy it could offer.¹⁷ The geographic scope of such publication was limited, however, because of the close control over the manuscript that Tarabotti retained.

It seems in any case that Tarabotti's initial ambitions did not include the dissemination of her ideas beyond the Venetian Republic. In letters which probably overlap temporally with those describing the manuscript's domestic circulation, Tarabotti reveals in fact that she is trying to print the work in her home city. The work had been promised to readers as forthcoming when Tarabotti published her *Convent Paradise* in 1643¹⁸ and was cited in her *Antisatira* in 1644,¹⁹ indicating that perhaps the nun believed she would be able to put the work to press quickly and that publicizing it would help to achieve that goal. In a published letter from the same period, with anonymous addressee, she asks for help in obtaining publishing privileges for an unnamed volume – but certainly the *Tyranny* – for printing, it is understood, in the city of Venice.²⁰ She acknowledges the difficulty of such a request but expresses confidence her addressee will succeed. A letter, probably subsequent to this, to a well-connected patrician writer, shows that Tarabotti's optimism regarding such publication was beginning to fade. She had turned to this writer for help in publishing the volume, but had been refused. She masks her annoyance with servility:

The prudence of Your Illustrious Lordship [...] demonstrated your maturity to me even in the matter of printing *Paternal Tyranny*. Not having denied me your efforts in response to my requests, [...] you let the outcome illustrate how inopportune were my demands and how bold my temerity.²¹

¹⁷ See Love H., *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: 1993) 36.

¹⁸ The printer in his note to readers writes 'You may soon expect from this most accomplished pen other, perhaps more piquant, compositions [...] The *Paternal Tyranny* I hope will be the first' ('Attendi in breve altre composizioni della stessa celebratissima penna forse più piccanti [...] *La Tirannia Paterna* spero che sarà la prima'). See Tarabotti Aracangela, *Paradiso monacale* (Venice, Guglielmo Oddoni: 1663 [recte 1643]), unnumbered page.

¹⁹ Tarabotti writes 'I wish to skim over these most truthful points which I discuss in greater depth in my *Paternal Tyranny*' ('voglio passar questi miei veracissimi sentimenti da me discorsi più diffusamente nella mia *Tirannia paterna*'). See Tarabotti, *Antisatira* 66.

²⁰ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 210, 260.

²¹ *Ibid.* let. 66, 123: 'La prudenza di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, che non opera nessuna cosa a caso, ha voluto anche in materia di stampare la *Tirannia paterna* darmi un saggio della Sua maturità, poichè, non avendo negato alle mie richieste il Suo impiego, [...] ha poi lasciato che gli effetti mi facciano conoscere quanto improprie furono le mie dimande e quanto ardita la mia temerità'.

Within the clearly insincere rhetoric of the letter, Tarabotti's protestations of her own boldness in wanting to print her work instead seem to suggest the opposite: that her request was reasonable and that it was her correspondent's inaction – not an intrinsic problem with her volume – that obstructed the printing. For attempts at domestic publication, traced in letters likely dating from 1643 and 1644, the nun eschewed the appearance of controversy and insisted on the work's acceptability.

Publication Attempts in Florence and Rome

The negative responses that Tarabotti received on her home soil convinced Tarabotti as early as 1644 that she needed to seek publication abroad, a possibility that was available to her because of her contacts with the diplomatic community in Venice. Diplomats, whose contacts with the patriciate the Venetian government tried to limit,²² turned instead to the active social space of convent parlors,²³ and in this sphere could not fail to come into contact with the renowned nun. Tarabotti had used these diplomatic contacts when she decided to dedicate her second published work, her *Antisatire*, to the Grand Duchess of Tuscany Vittoria della Rovere, and she exploited this same connection as she began to seek to publish the *Tyranny* outside of Venice. In a 1645 letter to della Rovere she writes that:

prostrate at your feet, I dare beg you to lend me the support of your most authoritative patronage in order to obtain from Rome, or else from Florence, the publishing privileges to have my *Paternal Tyranny* printed, which for certain reasons I do not seek in my own state. Indulge (I most humbly beg you) the audacity of my request, while I assure you on my word that the abovementioned work contains nothing that goes against the holy faith or against good manners.²⁴

²² Molmenti P., *Curiosità di storia veneziana* (Bologna: 1919) 48–49.

²³ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 88, 143: Tarabotti writes to former French ambassador Nicolas Bretel de, recalling his time in Venice, that 'nor were you permitted any visits but to poor imprisoned women' ('né l'era concesso di visitare se non povere prigioniere').

²⁴ *Ibid.*, let. 94, 152: 'prostrata a' Suoi piedi, oso di supplicarLa a porgermi il braccio del Suo autorevolissimo patrocinio ad ottenere di Roma, over da Firenze, le licenze di dar alle stampe la mia *Tirannia paterna*, che per certi fini non ricerco nella mia patria. Compatisca (umilissimamente La supplico) all'audazia della dimanda, mentr'io L'assiculo in parola di verità che in detta opera non si contengono concetti

Tarabotti, who elsewhere in the letters terms as daring her smallest requests, here makes a truly bold appeal: she asks the Grand Duchess for assistance in publishing her work – whose objectionability she suggests by the strong protest of its orthodoxy – in cities under the tight control of the papacy and the Inquisition.²⁵ Veiling the work's content, as well as the reasons she seeks to publish outside of Venice, Tarabotti does little to justify her request to the Grand Duchess, one of the most powerful women on the peninsula.²⁶

We have no record of the Grand Duchess's response, but another letter, likely written shortly before this,²⁷ suggests that Tarabotti did not place all her hopes in the Grand Duchess. Tarabotti was in friendly contact with the wife of the French ambassador in Venice, Anne des Hameaux, and on even closer terms with her niece, Marguerite de Fiubet.²⁸ A published letter to de Fiubet reveals that Tarabotti had approached the ambassador's wife for help in publishing the *Tyranny*, probably in Rome,²⁹ a request that had not been received positively.³⁰ Tarabotti does not spell out the geographic dimensions of her entreaty, which perhaps left a reader to imagine that she was, through her French contacts, seeking to publish the work in France. This indeed would be Tarabotti's next step.

Attempts to Publish in France

In 1645, ambassador des Hameaux was recalled to France and replaced by Nicolas Bretel de Grémonville, who passed two stormy years as ambassador to the Republic from May 1645 to October of

contro la Santa Fede né contro i buoni costumi'. The letter is dated based on an autograph copy, published in Medioli, "Arcangela Tarabotti's Reliability", 88–89; the autograph and the published letter are, with the exception of the date and location of composition given only in the autograph, almost identical.

²⁵ See for example Spini G., *Ricerca dei libertini: La teoria dell'impostura delle religioni nel seicento italiano* (Florence: 1983 (1950)) 334–335.

²⁶ Medioli sees Tarabotti's appeal as mystifying in view of Della Rovere's bigoted attitudes (Medioli, "Arcangela Tarabotti's Reliability", 75), but Spini sees it as more solidly motivated (Spini, *Ricerca dei libertini* 335).

²⁷ Zanette dates this attempt to August of 1644 (Zanette, *Suor Arcangela* 423).

²⁸ The des Hameaux were in Venice from November 1642 to March 1645 (Baschet A., *Les Archives De Venise, Histoire De La Chancellerie Secrète* (Paris: 1870) 437–438). In let. 250, Marguerite is called 'di Giubet'.

²⁹ For an accounting of this attempt, see Zanette, *Suor Arcangela* 304–305.

³⁰ See let. 250.

1647.³¹ During this period, Grémonville and his family established a close relationship with Tarabotti: the ambassador and his wife visited and corresponded with her and entrusted to her care of their two daughters. So Tarabotti, whose hopes of publishing the *Tyranny* on Italian soil had in 1644–1645 evaporated, sought the help of the Grémonville family to publish the work in on his home soil. Specifically, it seems that she entrusted the work to Nicolas's younger brother Jacques who had promised to print it in France. But we learn of the attempt – undertaken probably around 1646³² – only through her account of its negative outcome.³³ She writes to Nicolas:

The prolonged voyage of the *P[aternal] T[yranny]* would lead even the calmest mind to worry that something had gone wrong. Whoever loves fears.... I beseech Your Excellency not to disappoint my just desire to have it back, and I will pay whatever cost necessary for its transport. In truth I would merit reproach for being too naïve in giving it to a gentleman that I did not know were it not for the fact that he was the brother of Your Excellency, in whose service I remain.³⁴

Tarabotti's characterization of it changes markedly as she attempts to publish it in France. Tarabotti here, in contrast to the previous letters that discussed the circulation of the *Tyranny* manuscript or its publication in Italy, refers to the work only with its initials; in subsequent letters on this and other attempts to publish the work in France, Tarabotti suppresses the name of the work altogether. Tarabotti also expresses an affection for her work that emerges only as she attempts to publish it in more distant lands. Underscoring the remoteness of these lands – which her work reached only with a 'prolonged voyage' and from whence it can return at not negligible cost – Tarabotti nevertheless fashions herself as a responsible defender of the work, who wouldn't entrust it to others lightly. Tarabotti's repeated defense of

³¹ Baschet, *Les Archives* 438.

³² The effort probably dates to the middle of the Grémonvilles' time in the city since Tarabotti had already established a close relationship with them but was able to inform them of the attempt's failure before they departed.

³³ On the issue, see also let. 165.

³⁴ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 234, 280: 'Il lunghissimo viaggio della *T[yrannia] P[aternal]* aggitarebbe ogni animo più tranquillo e l'insospettirebbe di male. Chi ama teme. Il negozio è gelosissimo per me ed io supplico Vostra Eccellenza non defraudare il mio giusto desiderio del suo ritorno, che sottogiacerò a qual si voglia spesa nel porto. Veramente dovrei essere tacciata di troppo credula per averla consignata in mano di cavaliere che non conosceva quando non avesse a mio favore quel soggetto esser fratello di Vostra Eccellenza di cui sono serva attuale'.

her prudence as she undertakes this publishing effort seems designed to blunt any attack on her attempt to publish abroad as reckless.

Disappointed in this initial attempt to publish in Northern climes, Tarabotti continued nevertheless to nourish the hope that her ties with the French diplomatic community could help her to see her work to press. Through the ambassador Grémonville, Tarabotti came into contact with other members of the French diplomatic community, including the marchioness Renée de Clermont-Galerande. Tarabotti's *Letters* recount how Tarabotti entered into a friendship the marchioness, who was as enthusiastic about Tarabotti's writing as she was about the famous convent lace that Tarabotti helped her to procure. The marchioness visited Tarabotti several times in the convent and brought along her secretary Colisson, a Parisian man in his early twenties; when the topic turned to the *Tyranny*, Colisson evidently enthusiastically offered his help to publish the work. Flattering the nun with his 'enormous delight' for her writing, Colisson showered the nun with 'prayers and promises', which, combined with the marchioness's persuasions, convinced Tarabotti to entrust the work to him for publication.³⁵ Tarabotti devotes considerable attention in the *Letters* to her attempts to bring to fruition this ultimately fruitless venture, an attention which shows how seriously she pinned her hopes on its success. Since this initiative is represented in the *Letters* as her most serious international publishing effort and since through it she attempts to contact some of the most important people in France, I will examine its unfolding in some detail.

Shortly after the marchioness's departure from Venice sometime between the end of 1647 and early-to-mid 1648,³⁶ Tarabotti sent the noblewoman the *Tyranny*, along with the even more scandalous *Convent Hell*, for her to give to Colisson. She suppresses the works' titles but refers to them as her children. An attentive reader of the *Letters* – and of course the marchioness – would have understood that the manuscript she called daughter was the *Tyranny* while the one she called son was the *Hell*.³⁷ She wrote:

³⁵ Tarabotti offers this account of events in her letter on the matter to Gabriel Naudé, discussed below.

³⁶ The dating is Zanette's (*Zanette, Suor Arcangela* 424).

³⁷ She assigns these roles because the Italian title *Tirannia paterna* is grammatically feminine, while *Inferno monacale* is grammatically masculine.

Two offspring of my most sterile mind come to serve Your Excellency, but in exceptional circumstances. I would like the girl, who should remain withdrawn and far from worldly matters because in this city she would be looked at askance, to become a public woman in France. The boy must remain hidden even from the eyes of Heaven, as you guaranteed me with your irrevocable promise.³⁸

Tarabotti undertakes this new publishing attempt with a cheekiness that betrays her confidence in its ultimate success. She invites rather than eschews the scandal that female publication naturally summoned, transforming her maiden work into prostitute and herself into procuress, as well as purveyor of illicit texts. Tarabotti's insistence on scandal emerges also from the two contrasts she constructs. First, Tarabotti portrays the shocking *Tyranny* as clearly less objectionable than *Convent Hell*, suggesting her limitless capacity to provoke scandal. Second, and more intriguing, is the comparison Tarabotti draws between Venice and France: in contrast to the loose atmosphere she imagines in France – a titillating portrayal that is free, however, from moral judgment – her home city is place of discretion – a portrayal that would have surprised many of her contemporaries, not least because of her city's famous libertine atmosphere and relative freedom of the expression which Tarabotti herself enjoyed. But the metaphor of the woman's body that Tarabotti uses to vividly render this contrast suggests the point that she explicitly makes in the original dedication of *Tyranny* to the Republic of Venice: no matter its myth of freedom, no matter its unbridled presses, Venice is a place of repression for women.

Tarabotti hints at her distrust of Colisson even in this letter that accompanied her works.³⁹ A missive to Colisson himself, written probably towards the middle of 1648, shows that Tarabotti's fragile hopes that he would publish the work were already beginning to evaporate.⁴⁰ She had not received word from him for several months and was beginning to suspect a swindle. She evidently received no response

³⁸ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 232, 278–279: 'Due parti del mio sterilissimo ingegno vengono a servire Vostra Eccellenza, ma con stravaganti condizioni. La femina, che dovrebbe star ritirata e lontana dalla pratiche perché in questa patria sarebbe mal veduta, voglio che diventi donna publica nella Francia. Il maschio dovrà star nascosto sino alli occhi del Cielo, in conformità della di Lei irrevocabile parola'.

³⁹ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 232, 279: She wrote to the marchioness: 'Please do me the favor of telling your secretary that I have difficulty believing him because *Multa fidem promissa levant*'. ('Al signor secretario mi favorirà Vostra Eccellenza dire che sto in dubbio di crederli perché *Multa fidem promissa levant*').

⁴⁰ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 162, 218.

to this missive either, and by the end of 1648, the nun decided to go above Colisson's head. In a series of three letters, Tarabotti writes in fact to some of the most influential people in France, appealing finally directly to French prime minister Jules Mazarin, whose Italian origins were likely as appealing to Tarabotti as they were detestable to his French critics. Tarabotti prefaces these letters with one to the marchioness, in which she tries still to advance the Colisson venture. That these four letters appear sequentially in the published collection, the longest chain of letters in a collection where the order of the letters usually seems casual, focuses readers' attention on the seriousness of this affair. With such sustained attention to a venture that weaves its way throughout the letter collection, this series of letters indeed stands as a center-point of the *Letters* as a whole.

Tarabotti includes first a letter to Louis Matharel, who as French chargé d'affaires was the highest French official in Venice after Gremonville's stormy departure, entreating him to deliver a letter to Mazarin's librarian, Gabriel Naudé, whom Tarabotti knew directly. In the next letter, to Naudé, whose numerous visits to her during his stay in Venice Tarabotti recalls, the nun recounts the story of her decision to give her work – which remains nameless – to the Parisian Colisson. But, she writes,

Now six months have passed in which I have had news neither of him nor of the work, which, since it is the offspring of my unrefined mind, it breaks my heart to have lost it and I fear I have been deceived by that fellow.... Please do me the honor, too, of inquiring after the aforementioned youth and, if he cannot publish the work, may your goodness help me to do so. If the request is too great, make it more modest by simply returning the book to me safely [...].⁴¹

Tarabotti creates a compelling narrative – her most emotional account of the *Tyranny* in the letter collection, and the most complete – that justifies her attempts to publish in France based on a complex temporal and geographic equation. The three layers of time around which Tarabotti constructs the letter – the distant past in which Naudé vis-

⁴¹ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 135, 195: 'Ora son corsi mesi sei che non ho avuto ragguaglio nessuno né di lui né dell'opra, la quale, essendo parto del mio rozzo ingegno, mi creppa il cuore d'averla smarrita e dubito d'esser rimasta ingannata da quel tale [...] M'onori anche d'inquirire del sopracennato giovine e, s'egli non potesse darla alla luce, me ne favorisca la bontà Sua. Se la dimanda è troppo grande, la moderi Ella col rimandarmi almeno il libro sicuro'.

ited Venice, the recent past in which she gave her work to Colisson, and the present in which she appeals to Naudé – demonstrate a history of exchange between the nun and her French associates, first on Venetian soil and then between Venice and Paris, that amply justifies her efforts to publish in France. Tarabotti no longer presents her attempt to publish the work as transgressive – gone are mentions of the work as ‘public woman’ – and she instead invokes the sympathy of Naudé, and the *Letters*’ readers, by creating a tender portrait of her maternal devotion to the work. But her work’s return would only be a last resort; she politely but clearly asks Naudé to see to its publication.

Leaving no door unopened, she also attempts to enlist Mazarin’s aid in a letter that she asked Naudé, at his discretion, to deliver. The personal connection she emphasized with Naudé gives way in her letter to the prime minister to an emphasis on Mazarin’s ties to Venice, recently solidified by his inscription into the Venetian nobility.⁴² Alongside this civic tie, Tarabotti emphasizes her close relationships with Grémonville and Naudé, which bind her by association to Mazarin. Moreover, she does not fail to mention that she granted Naudé her works for inclusion in Mazarin’s library: this honor that Tarabotti vaunts to the cardinal and to her reading public is also a gift that requests reciprocation.

Tarabotti’s extensive preemptive justification cede finally to her request, whose details she leaves to Naudé to explain. She writes simply:

Meanwhile I pray the depths of your mercy, since you are the Astraea⁴³ of this monarchy, not to allow that the city of Paris, which is called a Paradise for women, become for me an Inferno in which I lose forever a work that I gave to be published to one who deceitfully denies me it.⁴⁴

Only schematically rendering the Colisson story, Tarabotti highlights instead the city that is its backdrop. As Paradise for women – a characterization of the city probably garnered from her French visitors⁴⁵ – Paris

⁴² In November of 1648 (Zanette, *Suor Arcangela* 425).

⁴³ Goddess of Justice.

⁴⁴ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 136, 197: ‘Fra tanto supplico le viscere della Sua pietà non permettere che, essend’Ella l’Astrea di cotesta monarchia, la città di Parigi, che viene chiamata paradiso delle donne, per me sia divenuta un inferno dove perda per sempre un’opera ch’ho data da stampare a chi ingannevolmente me la nega’.

⁴⁵ Tarabotti here and elsewhere manifests only this vague impression of the advanced status of French women; she does not seem to be familiar with more concrete elements of this topos, such as French women’s influential roles in literary culture, and

becomes Tarabotti's locus amoenus into which she can pour all of her literary hopes, which would come to full fruition with the international publication of her programmatic work. Tarabotti seeks to advance this literary goal with a literary appeal, building her case around the phonic similarity between Paris and Paradise – so obvious to the ear of this Baroque writer – and around the Paradise/Inferno dichotomy. She alludes to Dante, of course – a reference which could not be lost on the Italian to whom she writes –; but also to her own literary production, her *Convent Paradise* and *Convent Hell* (*Inferno monacale*). Knowledgeable readers like Naudé, who could illuminate Mazarin, or the readers of the *Letters*, where these works are advertised, could not fail to notice the link. Tarabotti makes this final appeal by creating her most explicit portrait of the distant city in which she hopes to publish, a literary oasis where Tarabotti's glimpses her own literary triumph amid the specter of defeat she tries by the letter's writing to ward off.

The elaborately framed and carefully worded appeal to Mazarin seems in any case to have come to naught. We have no record in Tarabotti's epistolary collection – which includes almost two more years of the nun's correspondence – nor anywhere else that Naudé or Mazarin received the letters or replied, much less that they attempted to help the nun. Mazarin was having his own difficulties in these years with the French civil war known as the Fronde (1648–1653), in which he was a principal target and which would send him twice briefly into exile; he may also have been disinclined to help because of the difficulty he was already having regulating the presses in exactly this period.⁴⁶ In view of these facts, Naudé may even have refrained from passing Tarabotti's letter to the minister. Tarabotti again requested Matharel's help in the Colisson affair in a letter written probably in mid-1649,⁴⁷ but again there is no record of response. This silence in the letter collection, as well as the failed appearance of the *Tyranny*, would have made it abundantly clear at the *Letters*' publication that Tarabotti's powerful contacts had let her down.

particularly salons (see for example Lougee C., *Le paradis des femmes: Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France* (Princeton: 1976)).

⁴⁶ Dejean J.E., *The Reinvention of Obscenity: Sex, Lies, and Tabloids in Early Modern France* (Chicago: 2002) 60–61.

⁴⁷ Let. 169. The dating derives from her mention of the death of Grémonville, which occurred in November of 1648.

Several other letters trace instead the disappointing sputtering out of this French venture. In early-to-mid 1649, Tarabotti sent to the marchioness de Clermont-Galerande a letter she said she had translated into French since she had received no reply to her ones in Italian. Thirteen months had passed since she gave Colisson her work, the nun lamented, and she had yet to hear from him. Nevertheless, she writes:

I know that the length of the journey, the distance of your land, and accidents of fate that might have occurred may have interfered with my wishes, and therefore my hopes still germinate in the favorable shade of Your Excellency.⁴⁸

Tarabotti focuses on the distance – linguistic, temporal and geographic – that separates her from her French associates, distance she tries to bridge with the translation and transportation of her words but whose looming presence in the letter belies Tarabotti's expressions of hope. Tarabotti tells the marchioness that, if Colisson encounters difficulties, she can still turn to Grémonville and Naudé, 'from whom I will receive every favor'.⁴⁹ But half a year after she had written to Naudé, Tarabotti's hope of his assistance was probably fading as well.

After writing 'an infinity of letters', Tarabotti finally received an evidently curt response from the marchioness that only increased her suspicion that Colisson was trying to swindle her – most worrisomely by plagiarizing her. In another letter from 1649, she replied by promising to fight back.

I say this so that Messer Colisson knows that if my book, translated into the French language, or even in the Italian, were to be published under any name but my own, as it is whispered here, instead of that fellow robbing glory from a poor little woman, he would earn disgrace and blame before the whole world.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 164, 221: 'So che la longhezza del viaggio, la distanza del clima, e gli accidenti che possono essere occorsi possono essersi anche fraposti a' miei desideri, perciò le mie speranze si mantengono ancora verdi sotto l'ombra favorevole di Vostra Eccellenza'.

⁴⁹ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 164, 221: 'dai quali riceverò ogni favore'.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* let. 149, 207–208: 'Ciò dico perché il signor Colisson sappia che se il mio libro tradotto nell'idioma francese, ovvero così nell'italiano, se ne andasse alla luce sotto altro nome che mio, come di qua si sussurra, invece che quel tale rubbasse le glorie d'una povera donnicciola si comprarebbe le infamie e i vituperi in faccia del mondo tutto'.

Tarabotti's self-portrayal as a 'poor little woman' is undercut by her threats against Colisson. Rather than emphasizing the distance between the marchioness and her – as in the previous letter and all others – Tarabotti here tries to collapse it, hinting at a network of rumors and innuendo that stretches from Paris to Venice and suggesting that Colisson cannot hide from her with linguistic or geographic distance. If he attempts it, his behavior will earn his shame in front of the 'whole world' – hyperbole by which Tarabotti seems to suggest a just international community of readers, on both sides of the Alps, who will stand with Tarabotti against the swindler.

By mid-1650, Tarabotti was fearing another sort of judgment from readers. She at long last had received some printed pages of her book from the marchioness, but rather than elation she experienced only dismay. She writes to the marchioness:

Finally, after more than a year, I receive a printed leaf of my book, in which there are more errors than words [...] It seems to have been printed in order to provoke laughter in the reader. The errors are so outrageous and numerous, of all kinds, that they change the meaning, distort the conceits, and I would be mad to wish it published in this form.⁵¹

The shocking incompetence causes Tarabotti, after more than two years of waiting, to abandon her efforts with the marchioness and Colisson. As outrageous as the printing is, Tarabotti seems equally incensed by the behavior of Colisson, who now seems to deny involvement in the affair at all.

That sir Colisson has not seen my works, this is a story to tell to children, for I handed them over to him myself, and by his silence I can infer the enormity of his crime. He will know this well, and soon, for although I should have to compromise my honor, life, and I would almost say my soul, I wish to show not only all France, but all the world, the deceitfulness of his dealings.⁵²

⁵¹ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 174, 229: 'Finalmente a capo d'un anno ricevo un foglio stampato del mio libro, nel quale ci sono dentro più errori che parole, di che ne stupisco, sapendo come il segretario di Vostra Eccellenza era praticissimo di quel carattere. Pare ch'egli sia stato impresso per mover il riso a chi lo legge. Li errori sono tanto esorbitanti e frequenti in tutti i generi che mutano il senso, stroppiano i concetti, e sarei pazza se lo desiderassi alla luce del mondo in quella forma'.

⁵² Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 174, 230: 'Che 'l signor Colisson non abbia vedute l'opere mie, queste sono cose da farsi credere a fanciulli, mentr'io gliel'ho consignate nelle mani, e dal suo silenzio posso argomentare l'enormità del suo delitto. Lo saprà ben lui,

Tarabotti thus declares her intention to humiliate Colisson in the *Letters*, which will come out that same year. Tarabotti assumes that her audience for that collection will be the same international community of readers whose judgment she earlier invoked to deter his dishonesty. If Tarabotti did not achieve that audience through the publication of her *Tyranny*, she intends to capture it with the *Letters*; and this audience will have, if not the *Tyranny*, at least testament to Tarabotti's fervent attempts to publish it in the face of inaction, ineptitude and dishonesty from her French contacts.

Despite the disillusionment in the long Colisson affair, the *Letters* in fact document that Tarabotti did not give up on her international efforts to publish the *Tyranny*. The nun again sought Matharel's help, with the letter mentioned at this essay's beginning. But for this effort Tarabotti altered her course. She wrote to Matharel:

I am sending a small work of mine to Your Illustrious Lordship, in the hopes that you will help me by sending it to France, where, as it enjoys freedom of belief, it may perhaps not be looked at askance for having undergone a second baptism. I beseech your kindness also to ask that person that the book be printed in duodecimo and properly corrected, and that the typeface be bold but attractive.⁵³

Tarabotti communicates to her correspondent – and an unnamed, possibly new agent ('that person') – the surprising news that she has changed the title of her work, presumably to the less inflammatory *Semplicità ingannata* (Innocence Deceived) under which it was finally printed. Such a notable change invites speculation that the nun may also have made mollifying changes within the work around the same time, perhaps including the elimination of the caustic dedication to the Venetian Republic. In any case, Tarabotti's decision to change title – foregoing the direct accusation of the biological and civic fathers of Venice that the title *Paternal Tyranny* suggested – shows the sacrifices Tarabotti was willing to make to achieve the work's printing. But in this letter, she suppresses the milder title and advertises an

e presto, poiché se dovessi mettere in compromesso l'onore, la vita, e quasi che direi l'anima, voglio far conoscere non solo alla Francia, ma al mondo tutto l'inganno del suo trattare'.

⁵³ Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 58, 114–115: 'Trasmetto a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima la presente operetta, acciò ch'Ella mi favorisca di mandarla nella Francia, dove godendosi libertà di coscienza non sarà forse mal veduta per essersi ribatteggiata. Supplico anche la di Lei benignità raccomandare a quel soggetto ch'il libro sia stampato in dodici e ben corretto. Che il carattere sia grandetto ma bello'.

act of conciliation as an act of transgression: a rebaptism that associates her, her work, and France with the most radical of Protestant sects. Tarabotti may have used this provocative metaphor to increase the reading public's desire for the long-awaited work. She may also have preferred to clothe this alteration in the garments of scandal to avoid the appearance that it was a compromise, or much less as a defeat, forced by Colisson. But most importantly, as Tarabotti again turned to her French contacts, she likely considered her provocative approach practical, a practicality also suggested by her attention to the details of her book's production, like its typeface and its format. Tarabotti knew the libertine leanings of some of her French associates, most prominently Naudé, and might have been appealing to their own self-perception as free-thinkers while associating herself with such tendencies. The nun, influenced by these associates' proclivities, may also – beyond any flattery – have believed France a haven for free thought, ironically reversing Naudé's observation that 'Italy is full of libertines and atheists and people who believe nothing'.⁵⁴ So when Tarabotti wrote to Matharel, she may have been describing what she thought was the French reality. At the same time, Tarabotti could use the Matharel letter to shape domestic perceptions of her literary career. For the Venetian or Italian reader of her letter collection, the missive would have not only have shown (along with many other letters) the strength of Tarabotti's international literary network, but also suggested the dangerous but thrilling difference of these foreign lands to which Tarabotti's works had traveled.

We must keep in mind that Tarabotti, at the time of these late letters' composition, was singularly focused on the *Letters*, whose publication was imminent. So the impression the *Letters* gave of her French dealings was as pressing to the nun as the long-desired publication of the *Tyranny*. Tarabotti's final discussion of her efforts to publish the *Tyranny* comes in another letter to Matharel, to whom Tarabotti entrusts 'my newborn child [...] with all my love'.⁵⁵ This final portrait of Tarabotti's extreme affection for her first work – the same scandalous, Anabaptist work she discussed in the previous letter to Matharel – justifies the extraordinary lengths to which she goes to see it published, and to

⁵⁴ 'L'Italie est pleine de libertins et d'athées et de gens qui ne croient rien' (Naudé G. – Patin G., *Naudaeana et Patiniana. Ou singularitez remarquables, prises des conversations de mess. Naudé & Patin*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam, F. Van der Plaats: 1703) 46).

⁵⁵ 'con tutta la visceratezza il mio parto' (*Ibid.*, let. 132, 192).

which she goes to represent her publishing efforts in her *Letters*. At the time of the *Letters*' publication, the refracted version of the *Tyranny* that we get through her missives was the closest to publishing the work that Tarabotti could get.

But the letter collection concludes with this last (or latest) publication attempt still in motion, and it seems that the venture came close to fruition. In December of 1650, two months after the *Letters*' publication, Giovan Francesco Loredano, Tarabotti's patron and the dedicatee of the *Letters*, wrote to a literary associate that 'the Paternal Tyranny will be printed in France; a copy has been promised to me, which I promise to you once I have it'.⁵⁶ Loredano, the central animator of literary society in Venice at the time, would have been well informed. But by January of 1651, this newest venture seems to have run aground as Loredano informs the same associate 'I cannot send you a work of Tarabotti's that I do not have'.⁵⁷ We are left to imagine the depths of the nun's disappointment since her letter collection no longer could chronicle it. Tarabotti died a year later, in February of 1652, without the satisfaction of seeing her work in print.

A Transnational Literary Career from behind the Convent Grate

While the tenacity and enterprise with which Tarabotti attempted to publish her *Tyranny*, or *Innocence*, are remarkable, what might be most striking about Tarabotti's efforts to publish the work – especially in light of its eventual condemnation to the *Index* – is her audacity. As she relentlessly sought to publish her work, did Tarabotti consider the danger of her efforts and her promotion of them in the *Letters*? Or did she so strongly believe in the righteousness of her argument – the sense of a divine imprimatur that she repeatedly expresses in her works⁵⁸ – that she was deaf to the signs that she received, in the form of

⁵⁶ 'La *Tirannia Paterna* si stampa in Francia; me ne viene promessa una copia, che avendola gliela prometto'. This letter to Angelico Apro시오 is cited in Zanette, *Suor Arcangela* 430; the full letter is published by Bruzzone G.L., "L'amicizia fra due letterati seicenteschi: Gio Francesco Loredano e P. Angelico Apro시오", *Atti del Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* CLIII, II (1995) 366.

⁵⁷ 'Della Signora Tarabotti non posso mandarle quello che non ho' (cited in Zanette, *Suor Arcangela* 434; full letter is published in Bruzzone, "L'amicizia", 367).

⁵⁸ Her dedication of the *Innocence* to God perfectly communicates her insistence on God's support for her ideas.

persistent refusals, of its explosiveness? If she was concerned about consequences, did she worry the danger might have increased the further she strayed from the protective ground of the *Serenissima*? Or did she imagine it diminishing the farther her work traveled from the Republic it attacked? Or was she unconcerned about repercussions, guided in her actions by the principle that she expressed in the original dedication to the *Tyranny* itself: 'Those who have lost their freedom have nothing else to lose?'⁵⁹ This disregard for consequence is belied by the caution with which the nun sometimes handled the circulation of her works: she explicitly discouraged the publication of the *Hell*,⁶⁰ for instance, and she quite forthrightly wrote in an unpublished letter to an associate to whom she sent the *Tyranny*: 'I pray you most adamantly not to share this with just anyone because of the potential for grave consequences'.⁶¹ The misgivings about the work that Tarabotti expresses in this autograph letter, likely from 1642,⁶² are not the usual feigned modesty de rigueur for contemporary writers, and especially women writers; she expresses a true unease about the work's riskiness – for her and her associate – even as she contends that the work was objectionable for political, not religious, reasons.⁶³ The most dramatic danger, a run-in with the Inquisition, was indeed a real possibility given the eventual posthumous condemnation of the work to the *Index*, as mentioned above.

Though Tarabotti's *Letters* may have attempted to thwart censors with such techniques as a lack of chronological or thematic order and extensive use of anonymous address, and though they trace her efforts to keep tight control over the *Tyranny*'s circulation and her tendency to mention its title with increasing reticence, it is noteworthy that the nun nowhere in them expresses the concern she articulates in the autograph

⁵⁹ 'Non resta che perdere a chi ha perduto la libertà' (Tarabotti, *L'inferno Monacale* 28).

⁶⁰ See pp. 294–295.

⁶¹ 'la suplico istantemente non comunicarla a chi che sia per rispetti di grandissime conseguenze' (Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova [BUG] E.VI.22, c. 122, Francesca Mediolì's transcription is in appendix to Rubeis, 'Lettere', 149). The letter was to Aprosio.

⁶² Zanette dates it so. The letter in any case predates the falling out between Aprosio and Tarabotti in late 1643 or early 1644.

⁶³ 'I know the work is offensive, but it speaks against political structures, not Catholic ones' ('So la materia esser scabrosa ma contraria al politico vivere non al catolico') (*Ibid.*). Tarabotti reiterates the same thought in a published letter to another correspondent (let. 253) but does not refer to the danger she mentions here. See discussion below.

letter about the work's danger. This omission is doubly motivated. The first reason regards reception. While Tarabotti sometimes sought in her published letter collection to suggest the *Tyranny's* transgressiveness – portraying the work, as we saw above, as prostitute or Anabaptist – an actual reference to the work's danger might have deflated the excitement she was trying to generate for the work. Moreover, such a reference would have militated against the work's publication, a publication that the nun may have viewed with increasing pessimism but which the *Letters* never show her renouncing. The second motivation for such an omission is temporal. At the time of the above-cited autograph letter, the nun – who had just started to contemplate the work's publication⁶⁴ – still treated it with great caution. In the eight years between the composition of this letter and the publication of her letter volume, during seven of which she was actively trying to publish the *Tyranny*, Tarabotti seems to have lost such reserve. The insistent refusals the nun encountered seem to have emboldened rather than chastened her.

This temporal shift mirrored the geographic one: as Tarabotti grew bolder over time, she also expanded the horizons of her publishing efforts. Realizing the strength of resistance to her work on home soil, she naturally had to seek lands more distant geographically *and* culturally in which to publish it. Tarabotti's representations of France – based on vague notions of women's advanced status and the flourishing of free thought, as well as its physical remoteness from Venice – bespeak the societal and spatial distances she perceived as she sought to publish there, distances she may have thought enabled her free expression while insulating her from consequences at home. But alongside this practically driven need for distance grew Tarabotti's increasingly broad ambitions: she sought to publish abroad – and to promote such efforts – also for an international profile. In the absence of the *Tyranny's* print publication, the nun's transnational literary network, so handsomely advertised in the *Letters*, became her vindication. And though the *Letters* cannot help but narrate the failure of this network to put the *Tyranny* to press, they also show the network – and thus the reach of the *Tyranny's* ideas – widening at each successive rebuff.

⁶⁴ This preliminary phase is indicated by Tarabotti's request to Apro시오 for assistance in editing the book.

Thus Tarabotti can vaunt, in the Republic that imprisoned her and other women and prevented her from fully revealing the crime, her literary freedom of movement. Traveling outside the convent, outside the Republic, beyond the peninsula, the nun's writing performed – even in the absence of print publication – what Tarabotti herself could not. If herein lies the irony of the *Tyranny*'s publication story – the distances to which Tarabotti went to tell the story of her own and other's unnaturally circumscribed existence – it is also its redemption: the long struggle to publish her work allowed her writing, and her imagination, to reach distances otherwise unthinkable. Tarabotti several times in her *Letters* explains her visceral need to write: she tells a close friend, for example, 'that I should leave off writing is quite impossible. In this prison and in my illness nothing else will satisfy me'.⁶⁵ Writing was her only liberation from the convent; and the further it traveled, in manuscript or in print, the greater the freedom it expressed.

Yet at the same time for Tarabotti, the distance traveled by the manuscript, in the absence of its publication, was also a sign of defeat, even if manuscript circulation did offer certain benefits, not least, the greater freedom from censor. It is essential to note in this context that the Church began to move against Tarabotti's work in the very year that it was finally published.⁶⁶ Manuscript circulation might also have allowed the nun to avoid the negative reactions with which fellow writers tended to greet her publications. But despite the breadth of the manuscript's circulation and the possible advantages of such diffusion, such distribution left the nun distinctly dissatisfied. She yearned instead for the benefits she associated with print publication: foremost among these were probably the ability to claim definitively as hers the ideas presented in the *Tyranny*; the enhanced status and sense of legitimacy that a print publication would provide – especially for a female author – in an era that still revered this technology; and the wider access to the work such publication would allow. These potential rewards drove the nun tirelessly to seek print publication, despite its possible risks and seeming impossibility. This unflagging enterprise still stands at the center of the *Tyranny* story. And because our raconteur does not tell us the end of the story – leaving us suspended at the moment of the *Letters*' publication – we can imagine various endings, but none in which she

⁶⁵ 'ch'io resti di scrivere m'è impossibile il farlo. In queste carceri e ne' miei mali non ho altro di che contentarmi' (Tarabotti, *Lettere* let. 49, 105).

⁶⁶ See n. 9.

relents. Did she continue to pursue publication of the work in France, perhaps through other means? Did she herself attempt to establish the contacts in Holland that eventually led to the *Innocence's* Dutch publication, widening still her literary network? Though these final details have not emerged, it seems unimaginable – given the unremitting efforts she describes in the *Letters* – that Tarabotti was not involved up until the end of her life in efforts to publish the *Tyranny*. Moreover, it seems highly probable that these efforts paved the way for the work's eventual printing, a posthumous sign of the astonishing transnational reach of this literary career launched from behind convent grates.

Selective Bibliography

- BASCHET A., *Les archives de Venise: Histoire de la chancellerie secrète* (Paris: 1870).
- BITTNER L. – GROSS L., *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648)* (Oldenburg I.O./Berlin: 1976 (1936)).
- BORTOT S., “Nota al testo”, in S. Bortot (ed.), *La semplicità ingannata* (Padua: 2007) 153–167.
- BRUZZONE G.L., “L’amicizia fra due letterati seicenteschi: Gio Francesco Loredano e P. Angelico Aprosio”, *Atti dell’Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* CLIII, II (1995) 341–374.
- COSTA-ZALESSOW N., “Tarabotti’s *La semplicità ingannata* and its Twentieth-Century Interpreters, with Unpublished Documents Regarding its Condemnation to the Index”, *Italica* 78, 3 (2001) 314–325.
- DEJEAN J.E., *The Reinvention of Obscenity: Sex, Lies, and Tabloids in Early Modern France* (Chicago: 2002).
- EVANGELISTI, S., *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450–1700* (Oxford: 2007).
- LAVEN M., *Virgins of Venice: Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (London: 2002).
- LOREDANO G.F., *Lettere* (Venice: 1660).
- LOGEE, C., *Le paradis des femmes: Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France* (Princeton, 1976).
- LOVE, H., *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993).
- MEDIOLI, F., “Alcune lettere autografe di Arcangela Tarabotti: Autocensura e immagine di sé”, *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* XXXII, 1 (1996) 133–141.
- , “Arcangela Tarabotti’s Reliability About Herself: Publication and Self-Representation (Together with a Small Collection of Previously Unpublished Letters)”, *Italianist* 23 (2003) 54–101.
- , “Chiave di lettura”, in F. Medioli (ed.), *L’inferno monacale di Arcangela Tarabotti* (Turin: 1990) 109–192.
- , “Le monacazioni forzate: Donne ribelli al proprio destino”, *Clio: Rivista trimestrale di studi storici* 30, 3 (1994) 431–454.
- NAUDÉ G., and PATIN G., *Naudaeana et patiniana. Ou singularitez remarquables, prises des conversations de Mess. Naudé & Patin*, 2nd ed (Amsterdam: 1703).
- PANIZZA L., “Note on the Text”, in L. Panizza (ed.), *Paternal Tyranny* (Chicago: 2004).
- RUBEIS F.D., “La scrittura forzata. Le lettere autografe di Arcangela Tarabotti”, *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* XXXII, 1 (1996) 142–155.
- SPERLING J.G., *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: 1999).
- SPINI G., *Ricerca dei libertini: La teoria dell’impostura delle religioni nel seicento italiano* (Florence: 1983 (1950)).
- TARABOTTI A., *Antisatira* (Venice: 1644).
- , “Antisatira”, in E. Weaver (ed.), *Satira e Antisatira* (Rome: 1998).
- , *Che le donne siano della spetie degli uomini. Difesa delle donne* (Nuremberg (false): 1651).
- , *Le lagrime d’Arcangela Tarabotti* (Venice: 1650).
- , *Lettere familiari e di complimento* (Venice: 1650).
- , *Lettere familiari e di complimento*, ed. M. Ray and L. Westwater (Turin: 2005).
- , *L’inferno monacale*, ed. F. Medioli (Turin: 1990).
- , *Paradiso monacale* (Venice: 1663 (but 1643)).
- , [GALERANA BARATOTTI, PSEUD.], *La semplicità ingannata* (Leiden: 1654).
- WEAVER E., ed. *Arcangela Tarabotti: A Literary Nun in Baroque Venice* (Ravenna: 2006).
- ZANETTE E., *Suor Arcangela, monaca del seicento veneziano* (Rome-Venice: 1960).
- ZARRI G., “Monasteri femminili e città (Secoli XV–XVIII)”, in G. Chittolini and G. Miccoli (eds.), *Storia d’Italia. La Chiesa e il potere politico dal Medioevo all’età contemporanea* (Turin: 1986) 361–429.
- , *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: 2000).

TRAVELLER, PEDAGOGUE AND CULTURAL
MEDIATOR: MARIE-ELISABETH DE LA FITE AND HER
FEMALE CONTEXT

Ineke Janse

Well-known eighteenth-century women educators such as Françoise de Maintenon,¹ Anne-Thérèse de Lambert, Jeanne Leprince de Beaumont, and Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, who exerted their influence throughout Europe,² were far from being the only ones. Other women followed their example, and further reinforced their influence. In this essay, I will focus on Marie-Elisabeth de La Fite, a late eighteenth-century author who resided during a period of her life in the Dutch Republic. She was part of the Huguenot diaspora, participated in the Enlightenment spread of educational ideas, and constitutes an interesting case of a ‘modern’ woman author. Seeking to become financially independent through her work, she also provided an important example to her daughter, who unfortunately did not live past the age of fifteen. Yet in Marie-Elisabeth de La Fite’s letters – presented here for the first time – we have a testimony of the mother’s influence. Because La Fite acted as a link in the dissemination of the works of other authors, I will situate her in particular in her female context, using different kinds of sources (intertextual clues in her own texts, egodocuments and comments found in other writings than her own), and focusing on her relations with some other women who acted as predecessors, readers, daughter or colleagues.

Marie-Elisabeth de La Fite

Of French origin, born in Germany, active in the Dutch Republic and later on in England, La Fite can be considered an eighteenth-century

¹ See also the article on her by Christine Mongenot and Hans Bots in this volume.

² See for the influence they exerted in Russia the article in this volume by Elena Gretchanaia.

cosmopolitan. Thanks to research by Clarissa Campbell Orr, which itself draws in part on an 1878 article by Louis-Marie de Richemond,³ we know the basic facts of her life. She was born in Hamburg on August 21, 1737. Her father, Alexander Boué, and mother, Marie Elisabeth Cottin, were of French Huguenot origin from the region of Bordeaux. In 1768, she married Jean-Daniel de La Fite (1719–1781), who also had Huguenot roots: the aristocratic La Fite family was originally from the Béarn region in the south of France.⁴ The couple lived in The Hague, where Jean-Daniel had been minister of the Walloon Church since 1752, and also chaplain to the house of Orange. Two children were born: in 1770 Marguerite Emelie Elise, and three years later Henri François Alexandre.

Then, in 1773, Marie Elisabeth de La Fite started her own literary career, with a translation from the German of Sophie de La Roche's *Mlle de Sternheim*. This was not however her first literary endeavour. She had previously helped her husband – whom she also accompanied in visiting the poor and the sick – in compiling the scholarly periodical *Bibliothèque des Sciences et des Beaux Arts*, published by Gosse in The Hague.⁵ In 1775 she wrote a series of critical essays and, starting in 1778, educational works, of which the most influential one would be her *Entretiens, drames et contes moraux*. She would end her career once again as a translator, with translations of Lavater and – again – La Roche.⁶

In 1781, La Fite lost both her husband and her father, and not being a rich widow, she needed to work. In a letter to her sister, quoted by De Richemond, she proves conscious of this fact:

³ Meschinot de Richemond L.-M., “Mme de La Fite, Lectrice de la reine Charlotte et gouvernante des princesses d’Angleterre (1737–1797)”, *Revue Chrétienne* 25 (1879) 243–252; Campbell Orr C., “Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Queen of Great Britain and Electress of Hanover: Northern Dynasties and the Northern Republic of Letters”, in Campbell Orr C. (ed.), *Queenship in Europe 1660–1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge: 2004) 385–386. Furthermore, we have the entry written by Campbell Orr on Madame de La Fite in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online update: 2005.

⁴ Haag E. – E., *La France protestante, ou Vies des protestants français qui se sont fait un nom dans l’histoire*, 10 vols. (Paris: 1846–1858) quoted in Campbell Orr, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁵ Quérard J.-M., *La France littéraire*, vol. 4 (Paris: 1833) 395.

⁶ For a survey of her literary production, the reader is referred to the bibliography.

la ressource la plus honorable et la plus sûre est celle que l'on peut tirer de son propre travail. J'ai des projets à cet égard qui, j'espère, suppléeront à la modicité de ma pension de veuve et de l'héritage paternel.⁷

A friend, Jean-André de Luc, a scholar from Geneva who acted as a reader to Queen Charlotte of England, recommended Marie-Elisabeth de La Fite to his employer for a post. His efforts were successful and La Fite left The Hague on October 9, 1781. She entered the service of the Queen as her reader and as a lady-companion to the three eldest princesses 'qui sont en âge de tirer du fruit de la conversation d'une personne instruite', as she described it herself in a letter to her uncle.⁸ She remained in the Queen's service until she died in November 1794.

When leaving The Hague, she left her son Henri behind, and travelled to London together with her daughter Elise, at the time eleven years old. In doing this, La Fite was in fact following the example set by Jeanne Leprince de Beaumont, who had lived at the English court some twenty years earlier, and had moved there in the circles around the parents of King George III, Queen Charlotte's husband.⁹ At the same time, La Fite's actions seemed to announce those of Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, who – like Sophie von La Roche and Fanny Burney – she would meet in London. In the following, I will discuss some aspects of La Fite's auctorial and mediating activities in relation to these female figures.

Jeanne Leprince de Beaumont, Precursor

Marie-Elisabeth de La Fite's relations with Jeanne Leprince de Beaumont (1711–1780) can best be explained by taking a close look at one of the former's works: *Entretiens, drames et contes moraux, destinés à l'éducation de la jeunesse* (1778). After having published three translations and a series of critical essays, La Fite published these *Entretiens*, whose structure is modelled on that of the 'magasin', a genre which became popular thanks to Leprince de Beaumont. The *Magasins* Leprince de

⁷ Letter to her sister, undated, quoted in Richmond, "Madame de La Fite" 247.

⁸ Letter to her uncle, 4 July, 1781, quoted in Richmond, "Madame de la Fite" 247.

⁹ Campbell Orr, "Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz" 385.

Beaumont had published between 1756 and 1767¹⁰ were meant to be both a treasury of moral ideas and a means to learn French. They were immensely popular throughout Europe,¹¹ and also strongly influenced La Fite's writings. In the *Entretiens*,¹² we thus find dialogues between a mother, Madame de Valcour, and two young girls: her daughter Julie and her niece Annette, who are at the opening of the book respectively eight and ten years old. The situation is similar to the one presented by Leprince de Beaumont, although instead of a mother she presented a governess, Mademoiselle Bonne, and her young pupils – all of them girls. Both authors provide dialogues which discuss morally correct behaviour and which alternate with anecdotes and tales illustrating their views on moral principles.

In the preface of her *Entretiens* La Fite deplores the fact that few books are available for children 'qui sont sortis de la première enfance':

Quelques-uns des écrits de madame de Beaumont, et les *Conversations d'Emilie*¹³ sont presque les seuls ouvrages français où la morale soit mise à leur portée (I vij).

She decides therefore to furnish some new material. In her dedication to the Queen of England, La Fite makes clear her plans for the *Entretiens*:

J'ai tâché dans une suite de fictions morales de présenter des modèles aux enfants (I vi).

Obviously, the effect she had in mind for her own work did not differ from that of her more famous predecessor. But although she admitted that Leprince de Beaumont deserved her success, La Fite had two reasons not to take her entirely as a model. In the first place, she was afraid that magical tales such as those inserted by her predecessor in her works would cause confusion to children. Furthermore, she felt some reserve would be appropriate with regard to early religious education. She preferred to:

¹⁰ 1756: *Magasin des enfants*; 1760: *Magasin des adolescentes*; 1764: *Instructions pour les jeunes dames, qui entrent dans le monde et se marient*; 1767: *Magasin des pauvres, artisans, domestiques et gens de campagne*.

¹¹ Montoya A.C., "French and English Women Writers in Dutch Library Auction Catalogues, 1700–1800. Some Methodological Considerations and Preliminary Results", in Dijk S. van et al. (eds.), *'I Have Heard about You'. Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf* (Hilversum: 2004) 192ff.

¹² Which were themselves also quite popular: after the first edition in 1778, editions were published in 1781, 1783, 1784, 1801, 1809 and 1820.

¹³ By Louise d'Epinau, first published in 1774.

[...] rendre les enfants attentifs aux traces de sagesse et de bonté dont l'univers porte l'empreinte, et qu'avant de leur apprendre que son auteur existe, on essayât de les conduire par degrés à découvrir eux-mêmes la nécessité de son existence (I xi).

The fact that Madame de La Fite did not appreciate the fairy tales in Leprince de Beaumont's works was related to her opinions about the effectiveness of the lessons given in her own stories. According to her, tales that were supposed to be useful to children should present the truth, first of all. To be perfectly clear about this, she has Madame de Valcour's daughter say:

On m'a fait lire des contes de fées où l'on parlait aussi de métamorphoses, de campagnes désertes qui devenaient tout-à-coup des jardins superbes, de princes qui se changeaient en oiseaux, de princesses en statues, etc. Les métamorphoses des chenilles sont bien plus intéressantes, car elles sont vraies (I 68).

As she wanted children to identify with the situations in the book, Madame de Valcour's method of teaching was based on the girls' own observation of their environment. Furthermore, by using the method of asking them questions, she obliged the girls to think and judge for themselves and it is obvious that Madame de Valcour takes their opinions very seriously.

Nevertheless, Madame de Valcour inculcated general moral virtues as being the best preparation for Christian virtues, just as the contemplation of nature was the best preparation for knowing its Creator. It was a matter of course that religion should be 'l'âme de leur [her pupils'] conduite, la source ou la règle de leurs plaisirs', as she wrote in the preface of the third edition of 1783. In this preface, La Fite explained that the volume represented only the first part of her work and that it would soon be followed by a second one in which she was going to break her silence about religion. She was opposed to an early religious education; her choice to postpone this to a later volume addressing a more mature readership reflects her views on that subject. In fact, this supplement figures only in the 1809 edition, published by Billois in Paris well after La Fite's death.¹⁴

¹⁴ This supplement, dedicated in large part to religious education, is reminiscent of a letter to Rijklof Michael van Goens, dated April 24, 1781, in which La Fite mentions her plans for publishing a periodical for children. The first part of that periodical was going to be 'théologique' and for that she could use the 'cours de Religion naturelle que mon Mari a composé pour la Princesse Louise'. Letters from Madame de La Fite

One of the particularities of the *Entretiens* when compared to Leprince de Beaumont's *Magasins* is that La Fite inserts not only little tales, but also playlets (which she herself designates as 'drames') into the volume. These were in fact translated from the German. Indeed, in her preface, she explains that she had already written half of her volume 'lorsque j'appris qu'il paraissait deux ouvrages allemands, destinés comme le mien à rendre l'instruction agréable et facile' (I xiv). She then decided to use these works. Just like the anecdotes and the stories, the playlets were placed in the text so as to introduce the dialogues about moral issues, and to make the instruction more pleasant and easier to understand.¹⁵ The playlets she inserted were written by various German authors. Of these, Christian Felix Weisse (1726–1804) and Johann Gottlieb Schummel (1748–1813) were apparently the most important to her: from the first of the two she took four plays, and from the second two plays. Both were influenced by the Philanthropin movement of the German educational reformer Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724–1790).¹⁶ Although they were among Leprince de Beaumont's critics, they were at the same time clearly indebted to the author of the *Magasins*. Her work had become the prototype (*das Urbild*) of the moral tale,¹⁷ and they followed her example while producing educational texts that were suitable for little children and could help them learn through play. These pieces were based on different genres, most notably fables, songs or plays, and preferably the children themselves should be the heroes of the stories. For the Philanthropins, children's education should be seen in connection with social virtues and therefore one finds lessons both for children and their parents in the playlets.

In Madame de la Fite's playlets we also find family relations and social relationships as important subjects. In presenting morally correct behaviour as an example to be followed, this theatre shows faith in the perfectibility of the child. La Fite chose rather spectacular playlets which could fire the imagination of the young readers. But, as Plagnol-

to Rijklof Michaël van Goens, 1773–1782, Collection of the Royal Library in The Hague, letter no. 52.

¹⁵ See also Plagnol-Diéval M.-E., "Madame de La Fite: le theatre d'éducation", in *Madame de Genlis et le théâtre d'éducation au XVIII^e siècle* (Oxford: 1997) 324–330.

¹⁶ About this movement, see Brüggemann T. – Ewers H.H., *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur von 1750 bis 1800* (Stuttgart: 1982) 16–36.

¹⁷ Köster H.L., *Geschichte der deutschen Jugendliteratur* (Braunschweig: 1927) 274.

Diéval remarks, possibly this was considered acceptable because these playlets were not meant to be performed on stage:

Le mode de réception de ces pièces, faites pour être lues [...] lève les censures ou les bienséances imposées par la représentation assurée par des enfants.¹⁸

One of the intended readers, Elise de La Fite – daughter and pupil at the same time – reveals some interesting details about this in one of her letters, as we will discuss below. The daughter in the *Entretiens*, Julie, also plays an important role when she draws her mother's attention to an improbability in one of the German playlets. She criticises the author because in her opinion, in order to teach *and* please, every author should write at least plausible stories, while this one lacks verisimilitude: the character of one of the children is too bad to be believable. Madame de Valcour answers by saying that a child who cannot love other people really becomes ugly, just as is described in the play. On another occasion, Julie again blames the author for an improbability: in the drama they just read, the mean character of the son differs too much from his father's. Madame de Valcour responds by explaining that the author was forced to blacken the other children's character in order to be able to emphasise the hero's good character. Julie's questions allow the mother to treat the subject in a dialogue with her daughter. This way of engaging her mother in a kind of 'meta-discussion' about the texts she is writing and translating is particular to La Fite, and seems to be paralleled in the writings of her own daughter: in fact, I have found some correspondence of La Fite's real daughter, which shows her indeed playing more than only the role of a daughter.¹⁹

Elise de La Fite, Daughter and Pupil

The mother-daughter relationship was a permanent context for La Fite in England – her husband being dead and her son having been left behind in The Hague. Elise de La Fite (1770–1785), who was with her mother all the time, was certainly exposed to the influence of the

¹⁸ Plagnol-Diéval, *Madame de Genlis* 326.

¹⁹ Letters of Elise de La Fite to Princess Louise of Prussia 1780–1785, Archives of the Royal House in The Hague, Dossier A 32–158.

latter's pedagogical ideas, some of which we have seen emerging from the *Entretiens*. When leaving the Netherlands, La Fite must have felt it her duty to occupy herself with her daughter's education. Her position at the royal court left her enough time to do so:

Je n'aurais donc à remplir que des fonctions douces et honorables qui me laisseroient du temps pour l'éducation de ma fille que j'amènerois avec moi, et pour des amusements littéraires.²⁰

In La Fite's *Entretiens*, the mother also plays an important part in the educational process. Indications about how important it is for a girl to be educated by her mother are prevalent, as in the passages in which Madame de Valcour's daughter is allowed to criticise improbable elements in the two playlets. Most likely it is not a coincidence that it was precisely the character Julie who made these clever remarks. Although two years younger than Annette, she beats her cousin in intellectual respects: Julie has been lucky enough to be raised by her own mother! For Julie, her mother is really an omniscient adult who knows and understands her daughter's thoughts. Madame de Valcour, conversely, also wishes to be an affectionate mother as well. When she tells the two girls that she has read a nice story in a German book entitled *Der Kinderfreund* (*L'Ami des enfants*),²¹ Julie reacts by saying that the author of this book must look like her mother. Then Madame de Valcour answers: 'Il est vrai que nous avons tous deux le même but' (*Entretiens* I 173). The mother figure as a confidante which La Fite created in her *Entretiens* fits perfectly with the new image of the literary mother of the period as described by Isabelle Brouard-Arends.²²

In twelve letters written by Elise and kept now at the Archives of the Dutch Royal House in The Hague, we have a testimony about this education from the perspective of the young girl. She wrote these letters to her pen friend, the Dutch Princess Louise, telling her for instance about the journey to England in 1781, and developing her description of the different stages of that trip. Elise had already written earlier, in 1780, a letter to her friend, who lived at the Loo palace near Apeldoorn in the eastern part of the country. The rest of the letters

²⁰ Letter to an uncle, 4 July, 1781, quoted after Richemond, "Madame de La Fite" 247.

²¹ In fact an early children's periodical: *Der Kinderfreund. Ein Wochenblatt* (Leipzig, Crusius: 1776–1782).

²² Brouard-Arends I., *Vies et images maternelles dans la littérature française du dix-huitième siècle* (Oxford: 1991) 430.

were written from England; the last one is dated April 29, 1785. In this year Elise died, after having become consumptive. During this period of five years, we notice how the girlish tone and handwriting of the nine-year-old Elise gradually change into the more adult style of an adolescent aged fourteen.

In Elise de La Fite's letters, apart from the usual expressions of friendship and passing on of greetings to Princess Louise, we gain insight into her mother's educational activities and the social network of mother and daughter. Of course we must always keep at the back of our minds the fact that Elise was aware that her letters were intended for a princess. She may have been keen to make a good impression on her highborn friend. Nevertheless, we can assume that what she tells in her letters is not contrary to the truth. We can only guess at the things she left out.

Reading Elise's letters with her mother's pedagogical ideas in mind, we see her educating this young daughter. On the road between Delft and Zevenbergen, after having spent the night in an uncomfortable boat cabin, Elise kept herself busy practicing arithmetic with her mother. Apparently, interrupting the lessons during the long journey was out of the question.²³ In London, thanks to Queen Charlotte's interest in literature and the fine arts, La Fite had access to an excellent library of over four thousand books, to be used as a resource for the education of the princesses as well as for her daughter's and her own self-improvement.²⁴ The great importance the Queen attached to the education of women must have attracted Madame de La Fite, given the ideas on the subject we found in her *Entretiens*. In Elise's letters, we can also find some evidence of *her* interest. In a later letter, written at the age of almost thirteen, she asked whether Princess Louise had already read *Les élémens de psychologie ou leçons élémentaires sur l'âme à l'usage des enfans*,²⁵ written by Monsieur (Joachim Heinrich) Campe. They were reading this – according to her – very interesting book with princess Elisabeth at that moment:²⁶ the mother was indeed putting her educational ideas into practice with her own daughter.

²³ Letters of Elise de la Fite, letter no. 3, 23 October, 1781.

²⁴ Campbell Orr C., "Aristocratic Feminism", in Knott S. – Taylor B. (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke etc.: 2005) 316.

²⁵ Campe Joachim Heinrich, *Élémens de psychologie, ou Leçons élémentaires sur l'âme à l'usage des enfans* (Hamburg, J.G. Virchaux: 1783). This is a translation of *Kleine Seelenlehre für Kinder* (1780), also translated into Dutch in 1782.

²⁶ Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 6, 14 July, 1783.

But reading together of course also included theatre. In 1784, they read a tragedy of Racine and a play of the German 'friend of the children'.²⁷ Elise's letters show clearly that she and her mother indeed took a lively interest in drama. On the way from The Hague to Dover, they passed Ostende, where they went to the theatre to see two plays that were performed by children, namely Grétry's *Le Jugement de Midas* (1778) and Philidor's *Le Maréchal-ferrand* (1761). Elise remarks that the young actors played very well and that she had an enjoyable time.²⁸ In London too, they went to the theatre, as Elise wrote in her letter probably in December 1781, shortly after they had arrived in England. Elise enjoyed it much less this time than she had in Ostende, for her English was not good enough to understand the text.

But Elise and the other children were not only spectators, they also played roles themselves, as we discover in one of her letters from 1783. There she tells Princess Louise that they had performed *L'Amour fraternel*, a play which her mother had translated from the German.²⁹ Elise conscientiously describes the casting and so we can see that three princes and two princesses played a role too. After the first play, one prince and two princesses presented an 'Idylle', a play that was partly translated and partly composed by La Fite. Finally the children played *Les Flacons*, a title which we recognize as one of Genlis's works.³⁰ Apparently La Fite's talents and interest in drama had found fertile ground at the Court.

The educational activities in which the daughter was involved and social networking were very much linked. Elise's connections to members of the royal family are significant, although quite probably they were also real friendships. Already in her first letter, when still in The Hague, she expressed her regrets about the fact that Princess Louise lived so far away, for Elise and her brother Henri remembered with pleasure a day they had spent together.³¹ So apparently the friendship did not exist exclusively on paper. Once in England, Elise found

²⁷ Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 10. Elise wrote February 17, in my opinion the year is 1784.

²⁸ Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 3, 23 October 1781.

²⁹ The original, *Die Geschwisterliebe* (1776), was also by Christian Felix Weisse and published in *Der Kinderfreund*. The French version is in volume 1 of La Fite's *Entretiens, drames et contes moraux* (1778).

³⁰ Published in the second volume of her *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes* (1779). Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 5, 18 January, 1783.

³¹ Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 1, 19 July, 1780.

another princess of the same age with whom she became friends: Princess Elisabeth, who was also born in 1770 – just like Elise and Princess Louise. The two girls in England saw each other every day and, furthermore, they also started a correspondence, under fictitious names, between ‘deux amies, l’une [qui] voyage à Rome, en Allemagne, en Hollande, l’autre [...] établie en France avec sa famille’.³² In a letter dated December 1781,³³ Elise regretted not having spoken to the Queen yet. On the other hand, her mother had already met the Queen several times. All these letters illustrate the way in which La Fite and her daughter moved in the court circles around the Queen.

Elise’s correspondence informs us also about men and women of letters in Elise’s entourage and at the court. In a letter from Windsor, Elise wrote to her friend:

Mr. Berquin est toujours ici. Je suis bien sure que Votre Altesse aime et lit ses ouvrages.³⁴

And in a following letter, she speculated that Princess Louise must already have read *L’Ami des Adolescents*, published recently by Berquin.³⁵ Elise herself did not finish the second part, but her mother, so she wrote, was delighted with it.

And then there is the famous author Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, whose name we come across more than once in Elise’s letters. Queen Charlotte admired her educational works and recommended them to her brother Charles when his daughters were left motherless.³⁶ A passage in Elise’s letters shows the popularity of her work with the Princesses and at the court: when the King and Queen went to London, the two elder princesses often stayed in Windsor so that their lessons would not be interrupted. On these occasions, Elise and her mother had the honour of spending the evening with the two royal highnesses and their governess, Lady Charlotte Finch. And then:

³² Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 9, 23 December, 1784.

³³ Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 2. The date is not very legible, but possibly it is 20 December, 1781.

³⁴ Letters of Elise de la Fite, letter no. 7, 22 September, 1783. Arnaud Berquin was the author of *L’Ami des Enfants* (1782–1783), which is not a translation of Weisse’s work, and would be often reprinted until well into the nineteenth century.

³⁵ Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 9, 23 December, 1784. *L’Ami des Adolescents* was published in 1784–1785; it was a translation of an English text.

³⁶ Campbell Orr, “Aristocratic feminism” 317.

Nous lisons quelque fois dans *Les Veillées du Château*. Votre Altesse en aura sans doute lue déjà une partie. C'est un livre charmant dont tout le Monde est enchanté ici.³⁷

According to Magdi Wahba, *Les Veillées du château* (1784) was the most popular work by Genlis in England. As he says, even Madame de Genlis's increasingly bad reputation could not stem the tide of this book's popularity. In 1785 already, an English translation, entitled *Tales of the Castle*, was published.³⁸ Obviously, Elise and the princesses read the French edition.

As she grew older, Elise's correspondence reflected more and more her own mother's contacts with Genlis, in particular those concerning literary projects. In 1785, her letters show that she knew about Genlis's publishing plans:

Madame de Genlis a écrit à Maman qu'elle allait publier une nouvelle édition de son *Théâtre d'Education* avec un Volume de Drames tirés de l'Ecriture Sainte [...].³⁹

She even knows, so the letters go on to show, the different titles of the new plays, thereby suggesting the close nature of these contacts.

Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, an Admirer

Madame de Genlis (1746–1830) indeed responded favourably to La Fite: to her work and apparently also to her daughter.⁴⁰ As far as the work is concerned, Genlis can be considered a follower of Leprince de Beaumont through La Fite. The admiration, however, was mutual. It was Madame de la Fite who introduced the Frenchwoman into the English Court during the journey of the latter to England.⁴¹ And on the other hand Genlis, when talking about recent works on educa-

³⁷ Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 8, 20 July, 1784.

³⁸ Wahba M., "Madame de Genlis in England", *Comparative Literature* (1961) 221–238. See also Dow G., "The British Reception of Madame de Genlis's Writings for Children: Plays and Tales of Instruction and Delight", *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29 (2006) 367–381.

³⁹ Letters of Elise de La Fite, letter no. 12, 29 April, 1785.

⁴⁰ The relationship between Elise and her mother may have inspired Genlis for her portrayal of the mother-daughter relationship between the baroness d'Almane and her daughter Adèle in *Adèle et Théodore*, published in 1782, four years after the *Entretiens*.

⁴¹ Campbell Orr, "Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz" 385. Genlis also mentions this visit, and an exchange of letters between the two of them in her *Mémoires inédits de*

tion in the preface of *Adèle et Théodore* (1782), refers to La Fite and to her own earlier remarks about her in her *Théâtre d'éducation*,⁴² where she also quoted the dialogues of Madame de La Fite: 'A sept ans et demi [Adèle lut] *Drames et Dialogues pour les enfants*, par Madame de La Fite'. She considered the work 'également estimable et intéressant, par l'utilité dont il peut être à l'enfance, et par l'esprit et les grâces qu'on y trouve'.⁴³ She therefore thought it was regrettable that these dialogues, printed outside of France,⁴⁴ were so little-known.

For this reason, probably, Genlis had been willing to help La Fite, when the latter sent her 'un petit ouvrage d'elle'.⁴⁵ Indeed, a following publication, *Eugénie et ses élèves* (1787), not only was dedicated to princess Elisabeth of England, Elise's good friend, but was also published in the Netherlands and in France at the same time, and was provided with an elaborate preface written by Madame de Genlis, recommending the book:

L'auteur de cet Ouvrage Madame De La Fite est déjà connue par des Dialogues relatifs à l'Education, qui sont entre les mains de toutes les jeunes personnes, & qui ont valu à l'auteur l'estime du Public, les bontés & la confiance d'une auguste Princesse, qui sait également cultiver les sciences, protéger les lettres, encourager les talens & distinguer le mérite.⁴⁶

According to Madame de Genlis, Madame de La Fite had an elegant and natural turn of phrase and her work was as pleasant as it was educational. She considered that:

[...] toutes les mères de famille s'empresseront de donner à leurs enfants un ouvrage où l'on trouve des principes si vertueux & si purs ; il me semble que la raison ne saurait s'exprimer avec plus de charme & d'intérêt, et qu'elle ne peut offrir des leçons plus aimables & plus utiles.⁴⁷

Madame de la Comtesse De Genlis sur le dix-huitième siècle et la Révolution française depuis 1756 jusqu'à nos jours, vol. 3 (Brussels: 1825) 316.

⁴² Genlis S.-F. de, *Adèle et Théodore ou Lettres sur l'Education*, ed. I. Brouard-Arends (Rennes: 2006) 49.

⁴³ *Idem*. 630.

⁴⁴ They were published in The Hague; the 1801, 1809 and 1820 editions were published in Paris.

⁴⁵ Genlis, *Mémoires inédits* 3, 316.

⁴⁶ La Fite Marie-Elisabeth de, *Eugénie et ses élèves, ou lettres et dialogues, à l'usage des jeunes personnes*, avec une préface de Madame la Marquise de Sillery, ci-devant Comtesse de Genlis (Amsterdam, 000: 1787), my italics.

⁴⁷ La Fite, *Eugénie et ses élèves* viii.

She then wondered why some journalists had been condescending about works in the form of a dialogue. It could not be because of the fact that only women wrote them because the famous Fontenelle and Pluche had written dialogues too! And about Madame de La Fite, she continues:

C'est avec raison que Madame de la Fite a composé des Dialogues ; ce genre exige toutes les qualités qu'elle possède : une sensibilité douce, une raison supérieure, de la finesse & du naturel.⁴⁸

After having spoken well about La Fite, Genlis takes the opportunity, in this preface, to further develop the theme of the relationship between women authors more generally, and attitudes adopted by men of letters towards them. Unlike the opinion of some men, she claims that there has always been a mutual esteem and no competition between authoresses. And she argues that it is precisely men who cannot endure competition and who show themselves unjust in their opinions.

It is interesting, in this respect, to further document La Fite's relations with her female colleagues. On the one hand there was Sophie von La Roche (1730–1807), whose *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) she had translated in 1773. This had created links between the two women, who met for the first time in England. The passages about La Fite in the diary that La Roche kept during her trip to Holland and England show her admiration for the translator of 'her Sternheim':

J'ai pris le petit-dejeuner avec ma chère amie de qui je voulais faire la connaissance depuis longtemps ; pas seulement parce que je lui devais la traduction de mon Sternheim, mais aussi parce qu'elle était inestimable par ses écrits, ses connaissances profondes, sa piété et les vicissitudes de sa vie.⁴⁹

On the other hand, Fanny Burney (1752–1840), who was sometimes part of the English royal household too, portrayed La Fite as a *larmoyant* woman, in particular when she describes this very meeting of La Fite and La Roche:

And it was not till after a thousand embraces, and the most ardent professions – “Ma digne amie! – est-il possible? – te vois-je? &c.” – that I

⁴⁸ La Fite, *Eugénie et ses élèves* ix.

⁴⁹ Von La Roche M.S., *Tagebuch einer Reise durch Holland und England von der Verfasserin von Rosaliens Briefen*. Nachdruck der Ausgabe von 1788 (Karben: 1997) 377.

discovered they had never before met in their lives! – they had corresponded, but no more!⁵⁰

In one of her letters she is quite heartless *vis-à-vis* Madame de La Fite, who apparently spoke bad English.⁵¹ Burney also claims that the Queen asked her to keep La Fite at a distance, insinuating that Madame de La Fite had committed a certain indiscretion.

If Madame de La Fite was indeed keen to cultivate her contacts in the Republic of Letters and to attach herself to writers of greater renown than herself, as Clarissa Campbell Orr considers,⁵² it is obvious that she succeeded in any case with regard to Mesdames de Genlis and La Roche, but much less so with Fanny Burney.

Conclusion

These women surrounding La Fite, although they took different positions in relation to her, do illustrate her various activities: reading Leprince de Beaumont's works, educating her daughter, inspiring other women writers and – despite Genlis's claims of female solidarity – arousing irritation in some of them. Clearly these female connections were embedded in larger networks, not all of them exclusively female. La Fite was not only inspired by Leprince de Beaumont, but also translated and quoted the Philantropins. Her first and most intimate 'network', her marriage to Reverend La Fite, was certainly responsible for her excellent connections with Dutch learned men and journalists, such as Rijklof Michaël van Goens, who contributed regularly to the *Bibliothèque des Sciences et des Beaux Arts* and also took a lively interest in German literature, and to whom La Fite could turn for help when working on her own translations.⁵³ In addition, La Fite's contacts with other women did not necessarily imply *approval*: as we have seen, she seeks to distance herself from Leprince de Beaumont on some points. And Genlis's insistence on women authors' mutual admiration and

⁵⁰ Burney F., *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay as Edited by her Niece Charlotte Barrett*, vol. 2 (London: 1876) 171.

⁵¹ Anyway, La Fite was capable, in 1790, of providing a French translation of Hannah More's *Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society* (1788).

⁵² Campbell Orr, "Aristocratic Feminism" 317.

⁵³ Letters from Madame de La Fite, Letter no. 49. According to Wille, her request concerns Sophie von la Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*. Wille J., *De literator R.M. van Goens en zijn kring* (Zutphen: 1937) 414.

solidarity, although illustrated by La Roche, might well seem to be contradicted by Burney ridiculing La Fite. In sum, La Fite can be considered a relatively independent woman, who was yet active in the middle of international influences and networks, both male and – perhaps more decisively – female ones.

Selective Bibliography

I. Manuscript sources

- Letters of Elise de La Fite to Princess Louise of Prussia 1780–1785, Archives of the Royal House in The Hague, Dossier A 32–158.
 Letters from Madame de La Fite to Rijklof Michaël van Goens, 1773–1782, Collection of the Royal Library in The Hague, Dossier 130 D 14, L 49–55.

II. Works by La Fite

- Histoire de la conversion du comte J.F. Struensée, ci-devant ministre de S.M. Danoise [...] traduite de l'Allemand par Madame de La Fite* (Amsterdam, Balthazar Munter: 1773).
*Mémoires de Mlle de Sternheim par Mme de La Roche, publiés par M. Wieland et traduits de l'Allemand par Mme **** (The Hague, Gosse: 1773).
Vie et lettres de Gellert, traduites de l'allemand par Madame D.L.F. (Utrecht, J. van Schoonhoven: 1775).
Lettres sur divers sujets, par madame D L* F**** (The Hague, Gosse: 1775).
Entretiens, drames et contes moraux, destinés à l'éducation de la jeunesse, par Madame de La Fite (The Hague, Detune: 1778).
 [trans., with M.M. Caillard – H. Renfer] *Essai sur la physiognomie, destiné à faire connaître l'homme et à le faire aimer, par J. Gaspar Lavater. Traduit de l'allemand par Mme de La Fite, M.M. Caillard et H. Renfer* (The Hague, J. v. Karnebeek – I. v. Cleef: 1781–1803).
 “De rijke man, een Oostersche vertelling”, *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* (1782)2, 292–293. The French version of this story, entitled *L'homme riche*, can be found in *Entretiens, drames et contes moraux* IV 158.
 [with C.F. Weisse – C. Knöppel] *Lecture agréable pour les enfants et particulièrement à l'usage de ceux qui apprennent la langue française à d'autres, ou par leur application privée* (Stockholm, Pierre Hesselberg: 1783).
Eugénie et ses élèves, ou lettres et dialogues à l'usage [...] des jeunes personnes, par Madame de La Fite, Auteur des Entretiens, Drames & Contes Moraux, à l'usage des Enfants (Amsterdam – Leiden – Rotterdam – Utrecht, Chez les libraires associés: 1787).
Réponses à démêler: ou, essai d'une manière d'exercer l'attention. Par Madame de La Fite (London, Murray: 1790).
Pensées sur les mœurs des Grands [par Hannah More] traduites de l'Anglais sur la septième édition par Mme de La Fite, lectrice de S.M. la Reine de la Grande-Bretagne et suivies de deux morceaux traduits de l'allemand par ordre de Sa Majesté: Avis d'un père à son fils qu'il envoie à l'Université. – Monument sur la route de la vie (The Hague, Gosse: 1790).
*Miss Lony, traduit de l'allemand de Mme de La Roche, par Mme **** (Lausanne, Luquiers: 1792).
 [trans., with A.-B. Caillard] *L'art de connaître les hommes par la physionomie, par Gaspard Lavater* (Paris, L. Prudhomme: 1806–1809).

III. Secondary sources

- BROUARD-ARENDs, I., *Vies et images maternelles dans la littérature française du dix-huitième siècle* (Oxford: 1991).
 BRÜGGEMANN T. – EWERS H.H., *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur von 1750 bis 1800* (Stuttgart: 1982).
 CAMPBELL ORR C., “Madame de La Fite”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online update: 2005.
 —, (ed.), *Queenship in Europe 1660–1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge: 2004).
 KNOTT S. – TAYLOR B. (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke etc.: 2005).

- KÖSTER H.L., *Geschichte der deutschen Jugendliteratur* (Braunschweig: 1927).
- MONTOYA A.C., "French and English Women Writers in Dutch Library Auction Catalogues, 1700–1800. Some Methodological Considerations and Preliminary Results", in Dijk S. van et al. (eds.), *'I Have Heard about You'. Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf* (Hilversum: 2004).
- PLAGNOL-DIÉVAL M.-E., *Madame de Genlis et le théâtre d'éducation au XVIII^e siècle* (Oxford: 1997).
- QUÉRARD J.-M., *La France littéraire* (Paris: 1833).
- RICHEMOND L.-M. DE, "Madame de La Fite, Lectrice de la reine Charlotte et gouvernante des princesses d'Angleterre (1773–1794), sa vie et ses écrits", *Revue chrétienne* 25 (1879) 243–252.
- WAHBA M., "Madame de Genlis in England", *Comparative Literature* (1961) 221–238.
- WILLE J., *De literator R.M. van Goens en zijn kring* (Zutphen: 1937).

TRANSLATION AND INTELLECTUAL REFLECTION
IN THE WORKS OF ENLIGHTENED SPANISH WOMEN:
INÉS JOYES (1731–1808)¹

Mónica Bolufer

The princess thought, that of all sublunary things, knowledge was the best: She desired first to learn all sciences, and then purposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence, and patterns of piety.²

I would like to give them some advice from the top of a mountain so that all could hear me. Hearken, women, I would say, do not belittle yourselves, your souls are equal to those of the sex that wishes to tyrannise you: use the intelligence that the Creator gave you [...].³

These two passages are from two different but closely related publications. They are fragments, respectively, from a fiction by a celebrated eighteenth-century English author in which the main female character expresses herself in these terms, and from an essay written by a

¹ This work is a substantially modified version of “Traducción y creación en la actividad intelectual de las ilustradas españolas: el ejemplo de Inés Joyes y Blake”, in Espigado G – De la Pascua M.J. (eds.), *Frasquita Larrea y Aherán. Europeas y españolas entre la Ilustración y el Romanticismo* (Cadiz: 2003) 137–155. Its reworking has benefited from discussions in the framework of the research project HAR2008-4113, the *European Network on Theory and Practice of Biography* HAR2008-3428 and the COST Action ISO 901.

² Johnson S., *Rasselas and Other Tales*, ed. G.J. Kolb, in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven: 1990) vol. 16, 175. The genre to which *Rasselas* should be ascribed remains controversial. The work was published and considered in its own time as a moral (Oriental) tale. However, it must be noted that it was presented to its Spanish audience as a novel, perhaps to take advantage of the growing demand for this genre in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and was read as such. Joyes y Blake Inés, *El Príncipe de Abisinia. Novela traducida del inglés por doña Inés Joyes y Blake. Va inserta a continuación una Apología de las mugeres en carta original de la traductora a sus hijas* (Madrid, Sancha: 1798).

³ ‘Yo quisiera desde lo alto de algún monte donde fuera posible que me oyesen todas darles un consejo. Oid, mujeres, les diría, no os apoquéis; vuestras almas son iguales a las del sexo que os quiere tyránizar: usad las luces que el Creador os dio [...]’. Quotations from Joyes’s *Apología* will refer to its modern, critical edition, included in Bolufer M., *La vida y la escritura en el siglo XVIII. Inés Joyes: ‘Apología de las mugeres’* (Valencia: 2008) 297.

Spanish woman who translated the original work several decades later, accompanying it with her own reflections on the customs, morality and social relations of her time, and in particular on the condition of women. Different words, yet connected by the sometimes very rich and complex relationship that is established between an original text and its version in another language, between author and translator, a relationship that I shall try to disentangle through a study of the case of Inés Joyes (1731–1808). This essay of biographical reconstruction and textual analysis sets out to reflect on the intellectual strategies used by some Spanish women writers of the late eighteenth century. These strategies served to justify their literary activity and their ambition to put forward their thinking in the public sphere of the republic of letters before the opinion and critics of the age and to themselves. An attentive reading of the brief known oeuvre of Inés Joyes, both as author and as translator, and an interpretation of it in the social and cultural framework of her time will enable us to come closer to the significance of translation as a form of appropriation and circulation which includes a possibly creative and meaningful relation to the original text. More specifically, we shall be able to understand the part that this activity played in the practice of writing by women in a particular context, that of eighteenth-century Spain.

From a methodological viewpoint, I am interested in showing that the sources and research procedures of history, and specifically of historical biography, such as documentary reconstruction and interpretation of individual careers in a particular family, social and cultural framework, can complement textual analysis of an author's written production from an enriching perspective. Similarly, in the context of the new studies that propose a transnational analysis of women's literary and intellectual activity before the twentieth century, it can be said that it is impossible to understand writing such as that of Inés Joyes without taking into account not only the local and national context but also, more broadly, the European literary system, paying particular attention to the intertextual connections that can be established between her work and that of other women writers across national borders.

Brushstrokes for a Portrait

The life of Inés Joyes was, until recently, totally unknown. The title page of her only published book offers no information, and the National Historical Archive in Madrid has no record of the compulsory printing licence for which application had to be made to the Council of Castile (the organisation responsible for government pre-publication censorship) and which, in many cases, provides biographical and sociological data about authors and translators. In fact, she was not entirely unknown to critics, but the studies that mention her did not supply any information about her life. Recently, however, an exhaustive investigation concerning her identity and personal, family and social circumstances has enabled me to reconstruct her existence to some extent, setting out from scattered and often indirect data in parish archives, military records of the male members of her family, and probate records.⁴ The documentation that refers to her, in which there is a remarkable absence of any personal documents (correspondence, memoirs or diaries) apart from her will, contains extensive gaps and silences, as tends to be the case when one tries to reconstruct women's lives. We know nothing, for example, about the education that she received, the books she read, her personal friendships or her everyday activities. Nor is it possible for us to know anything about her writing process or the reasons that led her to publish her essay. Nevertheless, the data obtained about her and, especially, about her family and social environment enable us to reach a better understanding of the apparent paradox between the firm, assertive voice that emerges from her writing and the relative obscurity that surrounds her life.

Inés Joyes was born in Madrid on 27 December 1731. She was the third of the six children of Patricio Joyes and Inés Joyes, both of Irish ancestry. The family possessed a financial company called 'Patricio Joyes e hijos' (Patricio Joyes and sons) which prospered in the business affairs of the capital and kept international connections with financial centres, from London to Rome, from Livorno to Paris. Like the rest of the Irish community resident in Spain, the family practised a strong

⁴ Bolufer, *La vida y la escritura*. Exact references to sources and archives can be found in this work.

matrimonial and social endogamy.⁵ After the death of her father in 1745, when she was 13, Inés and her brothers and sisters remained under the guardianship of their mother, who appears in the legal documents as a woman trained to engage in activity in the business world, attentive to the establishment of her children and the distribution of the property and concerned to preserve the future of the family business. In 1752, Inés left Madrid for Málaga to marry Agustín Blake, related to her on her mother's side, who was to become an important figure in Málaga commerce, largely thanks to the financial capital and family connections provided by his wife. After the wedding, the couple set up home in the city of Málaga, on the Mediterranean coast of Andalusia, which was then an active centre of export trade. At some point between 1764 and 1771 they moved to Vélez-Málaga, a smaller town nearby, which also had some commercial activity but was primarily agricultural, bureaucratic, ecclesiastic and military; nevertheless, they kept some business activities in Málaga and a country house near the city. They had nine children, four girls and five boys, and they maintained close relations with the Joyes side of the family in Madrid. When she became a widow in 1782, Inés was obliged to become intensely involved in the family interests, participating in lawsuits concerning inheritances and negotiating the marriages of her daughters and sons. She is not known to have taken part in public activity, but her home must have been an enclave of cultural sociability in the small town of Vélez-Málaga, as is suggested by the testimony of the English traveller Joseph Townsend, who enjoyed hospitality there in 1786 during his journey through Andalusia.⁶ She must have led a discreet life until her death, on 21 May 1808 in Málaga. In her will, drawn up in 1806, she showed herself, as head of the family, to be concerned about the distribution of her property, which had dwindled after her husband's financial collapse, and, as a woman of enlightened religiousness, to have little liking for external rituals.

Inés Joyes's life looks like an ordinary, relatively obscure existence, therefore, like that of so many middle-class women who lived

⁵ Examples of this are the marriages of Inés Joyes herself and of her brothers and sisters and other generations of the family. Villar M.B. (ed.), *La emigración irlandesa en el siglo XVIII* (Málaga: 2000), and García Hernán E – Recio Morales O. (eds.), *Extranjeros en el ejército. Militares irlandeses en la sociedad española, 1580–1818* (Madrid: 2008).

⁶ Townsend J., *Viaje a España hecho en los años 1786 y 1787* (Madrid: 1988) 324.

in provincial cities, far from the courtly settings in which the great enlightened aristocrats of the eighteenth century performed, such as the Duchesses of Osuna and Liria, the Countesses of Montijo and Lalaing or the Marchioness of Fuerte Híjar, in whose intellectual life writing was often a further activity which they combined with patronage, the organisation of literary and artistic conversations and events in salons, and participation in reformist associations.⁷ While individual trajectories should never be reduced, from a historical point of view, to 'case studies' designed to prove general assertions about the collective, she can be seen, to a certain extent, as representative of another social category of writers, those belonging to bureaucratic, commercial and financial milieux, a burgeoning group in the eighteenth century. Her life experience seems, in fact, closer to that of other middle-class women writers such as Josefa Amar (1749–1833?), Margarita Hickey y Pellizzoni (c. 1740–1793), María Gertrudis Hore (1742–1801), Josefa Jovellanos (1745–1807), María Rosa Gálvez (1768–1806) or Francisca Ruiz de Larrea (1775–1838). Having benefited from a certain education, but deprived of the professional and academic opportunities open to men in their ranks, these women sought, with greater urgency than aristocratic women of letters, forms of recognition that would make up for the relative obscurity of their condition. In Joyes's case, as for Hore, Hickey and Ruiz de Larrea, another important issue, that of their foreign origins, may have helped to develop their literary vocation and skills, by giving them access to wider linguistic and intellectual horizons. It can also help to understand how a woman like Inés Joyes, living most of her life in a small provincial town, may have connected in her work with general, international debates, to which she significantly contributed. The indications are that her family was cultivated and maintained a strong link with the language and culture of their country of origin. This explains why Inés Joyes decided to translate a book directly from English, something uncommon in the eighteenth

⁷ López-Cordón M.V., "La fortuna de escribir. Escritoras de los siglos XVII y XVIII", and Bolufer M., "Transformaciones culturales: Luces y sombras", in Morant I. (ed.), *Historia de las mujeres en España y América Latina*, vol. 2 (Madrid: 2005) 193–234 and 479–510. García Garrosa M.J., "La creación literaria femenina en la España del siglo XVIII: un estado de la cuestión", in Nava Rodríguez T. (ed.), *Cambio social y ficción literaria en la España de Moratín* (Madrid: 2007) 203–218. Bolufer M., "Women of Letters in Eighteenth-Century Spain. Between Tradition and Modernity", in Jaffe C.M – Lewis E.F. (eds.), *Eve's Enlightenment. Women's Experience in Spain and Spanish America, 1726–1839* (Baton Rouge: 2009) 17–32.

century in Spain, where intellectual output in that language was generally read in and translated from its versions in French, and it also explains the perfect command of English that she demonstrates in her translation of *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*.

Translation as an Intellectual and Publishing Strategy

Inés Joyes appeared fleetingly on the literary scene in 1798 with the publication of *El príncipe de Abisinia*, presented as a translation from English but without mentioning the name of the original author. It is the first Spanish version of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759), published almost four decades after the original, as was often the case in Spain with translated novels (Richardson's *Pamela* didn't appear in Spanish until 1794).⁸ It would be followed by three other translations during the nineteenth century, probably stimulated by the new taste for Orientalist fiction.⁹ Each by a different hand and with a slightly different title, their translators, intriguingly, seemed to ignore (or left unacknowledged for commercial reasons) the fact that they had been preceded by others. The particular feature of Inés Joyes's version, however, is that it was accompanied by an original text written by her, "Apología de las mujeres en carta de la traductora a sus hijas" ('An Apology of women in the form of a letter from the translator to her daughters').

After this publication her name was once again swallowed up in silence. The book seems to have produced little echo among her contemporaries; at least, that is what is suggested by the fact that almost no references to it have been found in her time, apart from two announcements in the newspapers greeting its appearance (*Diario de Madrid* and *Correo de Madrid*) and a brief mention in the memoirs of Manuel Godoy (prime minister between 1792 and 1808), written in 1836–1837, where he acknowledged her twofold contribution, as translator and as writer in her own right: 'Inés Joyes y Blake, translator

⁸ Deacon P., "La novela inglesa en la España del siglo XVIII: fortuna y adversidades", in *Actas del I Congreso Internacional sobre novela del siglo XVIII* (Almería: 1998) 125–139.

⁹ Johnson S., *Ráselas, Príncipe de Abisinia*, trans. F. Fernández (London: 1813); *El héroe de Abisinia*, trans. M.-A. Collado (Valencia: 1831); *Historia de Rasela, príncipe de Abisinia*, trans. M. Busquets (Madrid – Barcelona: 1860).

of an English novel entitled *El Príncipe de Abisinia*, to which she added an original *Apología de las mujeres*, written with talent and expertise'.¹⁰ Significantly enough, the later translators of Johnson's *Rasselas* never even named their predecessor.

To understand why Inés Joyes chose to present herself in public by way of a translation it is necessary to consider deeply the significances of translation as a cultural and publishing practice in the eighteenth century, and also to pay attention to its specific significance as a way for women to gain access to writing and publication. It was used by the Spanish enlightened elites to express and strengthen their links with the European culture of the Enlightenment, mainly (but not solely) French, thus showing themselves to be part of an international community that shared similar moral values, aesthetic and literary tastes and social aims.¹¹ For publishers, commissioning translations enabled them to provide an agile response to the demands of an expanding market and to adapt to their readers' tastes, particularly in the case of much-sought-after new genres, such as the periodical press or the sentimental novel.

For translators, translating a foreign work could achieve various objectives: it provided them with income, and it enabled them to present themselves as cultivated persons abreast of new intellectual trends. In fact, authorship and translation were not radically different forms of intellectual activity. In the light of modern literary theory, translation contains creative dimensions of adaptation and appropriation. This margin of creativity was even broader in the eighteenth century, when, given the absence of a modern concept of intellectual property and authors' legal rights over their works, translations could be very free versions of the original text. The very selection of the work to be translated, which undoubtedly involved considerations of opportuneness and marketability but also of literary taste and affinity for the content, the forewords which generally introduced the adapted version, justifying the choice of the work and the criteria followed in the translation, erudite or explanatory notes about terms and usage

¹⁰ 'Inés Joyes y Blake, traductora de la novela inglesa intitulada *El Príncipe de Abisinia*, a la que añadió una *Apología de las mujeres*, escrita con talento y maestría'. Godoy M., *Memorias* (Alicante: 2008) 559.

¹¹ Lafarga F. (ed.), *La traducción en España (1750–1830): libro, literatura y cultura* (Lleida: 1999); Donaire M.L. – Lafarga F. (eds.), *Traducción y adaptación cultural. España–Francia* (Oviedo: 1991).

foreign to Spanish readers or, more radically, alterations (and often censorship) of the text to adapt it ‘to the customs of the country’ were opportunities for the active intervention of the translator upon the text which could end up by transforming the work itself into something different from the original.¹²

In the eighteenth century, among the small but growing number of (mostly elite) women who wrote and published, quite a few engaged in translation, ranging from well-known writers and intellectuals such as Émilie du Châtelet, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elisabetta Caminer Turra, to little-known, forgotten or anonymous women of letters. In the case of Spain, by their versions, translated primarily from French, secondarily from Italian and more exceptionally from English, these women translators helped to connect Spanish culture with the various currents of thought and literary sensibility of European letters: from Jansenist religiosity to logic and pedagogy; from agronomy to literary history; from neoclassical drama to sentimental novels or travel narratives.¹³ It is noteworthy that among women translators there was a special predilection for translating works by other women, particularly French women writing on pedagogical or moral themes, such as Anne-Thérèse, marquise de Lambert (whose *Oeuvres* were translated by Cayetana de la Cerda, Countess of Lalaing), Louise d’Épinay (*Les conversations d’Émilie*, by Ana Muñoz), Françoise de Graffigny (*Lettres d’une Péruvienne*, by María Rosario Romero) or Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont (*Les Américaines* and *Lettres de Mme Du Montier*, by Caye-

¹² Bassnet S., “Influence and Intertextuality: A Reappraisal”, *Forum for Modern Languages Studies* 43, 2 (2007) 134–146. Krontiris T., *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (New York: 1992). Jaffe C., “From *The Female Quixote* to *Don Quijote con faldas*: Translation and Transculturation”, *Dieciocho* 28, 2 (2005) 120–126.

¹³ Among other examples of translations, María Francisca de Sales Portocarrero, Countess of Montijo (Le Tourneux’s *Instructions sur le sacrement du mariage*), Catalina Caso (Rollin’s *Traité des études*), María Josefa Alvarado, Marchioness of Tolosa (Condillac’s *Logique*), Margarita Hickey (Racine’s *Andromaque* and Voltaire’s *Œdipe* and *Alzire*), Antonia Río y Arnedo (Saint Lambert’s *Sara Th...*), Josefa Amar (Lampillas’s *Saggio storico apologetico della letteratura spagnola*, and Grisellini’s *Discurso sobre el problema de que corresponde a los párrocos y curas de aldeas el instruir a los labradores*). See López-Cordón M.V., “Traducciones y traductoras en la España de finales del siglo XVIII”, in Segura C. – Niefía G. (eds.), *Entre la marginación y el desarrollo. Mujeres y hombres en la Historia* (Madrid: 1996) 89–112; Bolufer M., *Mujeres e Ilustración. La construcción de la feminidad en la España del siglo XVIII* (Valencia: 1998) 331 ff; Smith T.A., “Writing Out of the Margins: Women, Translation, and the Spanish Enlightenment”, *Journal of Women’s History* 15, 1 (2003) 116–143, and *The Emerging Female Citizen. Gender and Enlightenment in Spain* (Berkeley: 2006).

tana de la Cerda and Antonia Río, respectively).¹⁴ Translating enabled women to apply their knowledge of foreign languages, which became in the eighteenth century an accepted and sought-after ingredient in the education that young women of good family received in the best-prepared religious institutions or under the guidance of private teachers. Above all, however, translating allowed them to make themselves heard in public from a somewhat sheltered position, in keeping with the attitude of modesty expected of their sex. Some women authors, such as Josefa Amar or Margarita Hickey, combined translating with other literary activity; others, such as Cayetana de la Cerda or Catalina Caso, only published translations.

Inés Joyes: Translation and Authorship

It is in this context that one should situate and interpret Inés Joyes's activity as the translator of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, and, at the same time, as we shall see, as the author of the "Apología de las mujeres" – 'An apology of women'. Why did she choose to translate that particular work? Her choice might be explained by the recognition and popularity enjoyed by Johnson and his *Rasselas* in the English-speaking world and further afield. However, I think one should add to these general reasons others of a more personal nature, indicative of her intellectual attitude. Samuel Johnson was an enormously respected figure in the England of his time, a prolific writer with a vast, erudite literary output which included, especially, his periodical, *The Rambler*, and his monumental dictionary of the English language, and he was a man of letters very well connected with the literary circles of his time. Among his works, *Rasselas* was one of those that became most widely known, both in England and elsewhere.¹⁵ Published anonymously in 1759, it immediately achieved great success. There were 28 editions or reimpressions in England and Ireland during the eighteenth century and a few more in America, as well as translations into

¹⁴ Bolufer M., "Pedagogía y moral en el Siglo de las Luces: las escritoras francesas y su recepción en España", *Revista de Historia Moderna* 20 (2002) 251–291, and "Conversations from a Distance: Spanish and French Eighteenth-Century Women Writers", in De Ros X. – Coates G. (eds.), *Companion to Spanish Women's Studies* (forthcoming).

¹⁵ As introductions to the immense bibliography on Johnson, see Rogers P., *The Samuel Johnson Encyclopedia* (Westport, Conn. – London: 1996), and Clingham G. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Johnson* (Cambridge: 1997).

six other languages (including ten editions in French, four in German, two each in Italian and Russian, one in Dutch). Its contents made it a very controversial work in its own time and subsequently, for literary critics, to the present day.¹⁶

It is a philosophical fiction which tells of the journey on which Prince Rasselas and Princess Nekayah, his sister, set out, incognito, venturing beyond the limits of the Happy Valley where they had been brought up with no contact with the real world, to explore human nature and social relations in the company of a wise teacher/philosopher, Imlac, and the Princess's favourite maid, Pekuah. Its conclusions are far from positive; rather, they underline the inapprehensible nature of happiness and the omnipresence of evil in the lives of human beings, as the introduction to the story anticipates:

Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas prince of Abyssinia.¹⁷

This general characteristic of the work and particularly its ambiguous ending ("The conclusion, in which nothing is concluded"), open to many interpretations, have encouraged comparisons, ever since, with Voltaire's *Candide, ou l'optimisme* (1759), another philosophical fiction with a disenchanted tone, but in this case more acid and satiric.

Apart from other considerations of literary quality or publishing opportuneness which may have weighed in its selection, Inés Joyes may have felt doubly addressed by this work. Such a text, clear-sighted and disenchanted, was very pertinent at a difficult, uncertain moment, the time of the Spanish crisis in the 1790s, when the impact of the French Revolution precipitated the break-up of the enlightened elites and the conservative reaction. She may also have identified with Johnson's *Rasselas* because the main female characters, Princess Nekayah and her friend Pekuah, are cultured, resolute, active women, and because it presents an unusually negative view of marriage while placing great emphasis on the education and personal autonomy of women.¹⁸

¹⁶ Parker F., "The Skepticism of Johnson's *Rasselas*", and Lynn S., "Johnson's Critical Reception", in Clingham, *Cambridge Companion to Samuel Johnson* 127–142, 240–253.

¹⁷ Johnson, *Rasselas* 7.

¹⁸ Kemmerer K., 'A Neutral Being Between the Sexes': Johnson's *Sexual Politics* (Lewisburg: 1998); "Johnson and Gender. Special Issue", *South Central Review* 9, 4 (1992) 1–80. It

The version that Inés Joyes made of Johnson's text is faithful, keeping to the original text with very few exceptions, written in an elegant, flowing style that shows her excellent command of the literary registers of both English and Spanish and that allows us to intuit a careful intellectual training and wide reading. She published her translation accompanied by two original texts, a brief dedication to the Duchess of Osuna and Countess of Benavente, Josefa Pimentel, and, as already indicated, the 'Apology of women' in the form of a letter to her daughters, which she placed after her translation, even though it was a totally independent essay with no reference to the text which it formally accompanied. Indeed, there is no direct relationship between the contents of the two works. Yet it is possible to see some partial coincidence of approaches which might explain the interest that Johnson's philosophical fiction had aroused in her.

Both Johnson's story and Inés Joyes's essay represent values and display attitudes which we might consider enlightened, broadly speaking: praise of knowledge, the ranking of merit and virtue above riches, and the figure of the ruler who aims to achieve the well-being of his subjects. In both texts there is a firm demand for morality and the containment of the passions by reason, which, as seen by Nekayah (and also by Inés Joyes), is expressed above all in censure of the frivolous attitudes of women educated in accordance with the dominant values. One can also see in both a far from flattering view of marriage, which in *Rasselas* is the subject of a long moral discussion between the brother and sister based on the many examples of domestic unhappiness presented to them by their travels and observations (chapters XXVI and XXIX). Whereas *Rasselas* defends marriage, invoking the natural quality of the conjugal tie and the general interest of preserving order, Nekayah emphasises family discords and the difficulty of finding personal happiness in such a state, thus introducing a tension between social interest and personal well-being that the story does not resolve. Finally, both the fictional characters and Inés Joyes in her own essay show their appreciation of social relations between men and women. The wise astronomer whom *Rasselas* and Nekayah visit during

is unlikely, though, that Inés Joyes knew of the excellent relations that Samuel Johnson maintained with women writers such as Elizabeth Carter, Hester Thrale/Piozzi, Fanny Burney, Anne Williams, Hannah More, Charlotte Lennox or even the young Mary Wollstonecraft, almost none of whom (with the exception of Lennox and Wollstonecraft, and these only at the beginning of the nineteenth century) were translated or heard of in Spain. Clarke N., *Johnson's Women* (London: 2000).

their pilgrimage in search of the state of greatest happiness regrets having set himself apart from the world to devote himself solely to the pursuit of science in isolation, thus renouncing the friendship and love of women, which function in the story as a broader representation of the intrinsically sociable nature of human beings.

“An Apology for Women”

Yet it is, of course, in the “Apología de las mujeres” that Inés Joyes’s ideas are expressed most clearly. It is an essay 30 pages long, written in a flowing, lively, elegant style. A text not at all erudite in form, but rich and substantial in content, it engages in dialogue with other Spanish and European writings of the time. It is a work of maturity, seemingly shaped by the author’s readings and imbued with her experiences, forming a strongly felt denunciation and exhortation. One can perceive in it intertextual echoes that refer to other contemporary works, and this should be interpreted not so much as the product of a direct influence but more as a display of a coincidence of intellectual strategies and approaches. As explicit sources, Inés Joyes only makes some references to *Defensa de las mujeres* (‘Defense of women’) by the enlightened Spanish writer Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, published in 1726 in the first volume of his *Teatro crítico de errores comunes* (‘Critical theater of common errors’) and the origin of a lively controversy in its time.¹⁹ However, it is possible to suspect the presence of echoes of other voices in the “Apología”, such as those of the enlightened Spanish writer Josefa Amar and of Mary Wollstonecraft. The influence of the former, though impossible to demonstrate, is more than likely, for Josefa Amar enjoyed great prestige and reached a large reading public with her *Discurso en defensa del talento de las mujeres* (1786, ‘Discourse in defense of women’s talent’) and *Discurso sobre la educación física y moral de las mujeres* (1790, ‘Discourse on women’s physical and moral education’), which Inés Joyes may have read.²⁰ As for the latter, Inés Joyes’s mother tongue was English and it is possible that she may have read

¹⁹ Bolufer M., “*Neither Male, nor Female: Rational Equality in the Spanish Enlightenment*”, in Taylor B. – Knott S. (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (London: 2005) 389–409.

²⁰ Amar y Borbón J., *Discurso sobre la educación física y moral de las mujeres* (Madrid: 1994); López-Cordón M.V., *Condición femenina y razón ilustrada. Josefa Amar y Borbón* (Sara-gossa: 2005).

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), as did her Spanish and also half-Irish contemporary Francisca Ruiz de Larrea (for which she was reproached by her husband), who years later translated Wollstonecraft's *Letters from Scandinavia*. Moreover, Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* had been reviewed in 1792 by a Spanish newspaper, the *Diario de Madrid* (6 to 10 September), on the basis of its French translation.

The connecting theme of the "Apología" is somewhat similar to Josefa Amar's *Discurso en defensa del talento de las mujeres* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*, despite the profound differences between them. The text is articulated by the conviction of the moral and intellectual capacity of women and the painful awareness that social standards and values, including education, moral criteria and sentimental expectations, are profoundly unequal for the two sexes. The author also denounces the harmful effects that this asymmetry has on women's morale, their education and their self-esteem and dignity, to the extent of making them jointly responsible for their own degradation.

As its title indicates, the "Apología" is not only a reflection but also, fundamentally, an exhortation aimed at convincing men and animating women. It begins with a vigorous complaint which reveals the painful paradox between the rhetoric of gallantry and adulation frequent in the social and amorous relations between the sexes and the reality of the scant consideration in which women are held:

I cannot patiently suffer the ridiculous role that we women generally play in the world, sometimes idolised as goddesses and sometimes despised even by men who are famed for being wise. We are loved, abhorred, praised, vituperated, celebrated, respected, despised and censured.²¹

This is how Inés Joyes begins her essay, showing her disagreement and indignation with regard to the extreme asymmetry of the codes of virtue and amorous conduct, which require of women a sexual restraint and a modesty that men are constantly besieging with their words and deeds. And she concludes by returning the initiative to women, with an exhortation that they should take into their own hands the responsibility for becoming full moral and intellectual subjects and contributing to the transformation of social values and behaviour. The essay is pervaded by a moral concern that seems deeply felt. Its arguments

²¹ 'No puedo sufrir con paciencia el ridículo papel que generalmente hacemos las mujeres en el mundo, unas veces idolatradas como deidades y otras despreciadas aun de hombres que tienen fama de sabios. Somos queridas, aborrecidas, alabadas, vituperadas, celebradas, respetadas, despreciadas y censuradas' (Joyes, *Apología* 275).

seek to convince, but also to transmit emotion and indignation. It sets out to imbue women with a high idea of virtue and an intense confidence in their own moral and intellectual capacity and in their role in the reform of customs. From beginning to end, seemingly prompted more by her own reflections than as the result of following a rigid plan, the author vehemently links together the main themes and arguments that made up gender debate at the end of the eighteenth century and that she shared with many of her Spanish and European contemporaries: the position and authority of the woman writer, the intellectual capacity and education of women, social and family morality, marriage and customs.

Inés Joyes defends women's reason, declaring her position in the debate that had been going on since the late Middle Ages (*querelle des femmes*) and that had taken on new profiles in the eighteenth century. Going counter to what many of her contemporaries thought, she does not consider it as a debate that has been resolved but as an open, burning controversy in her time ('It is known that the dispute about the preference or pre-eminence of the sexes is one of the commonest subjects of conversation in society').²² In contrast to the most widespread tendency in her time, which, while avoiding any mention of inferiority, nevertheless attributed a diminished reason to women, she maintains the equality of their moral and intellectual aptitudes, on the basis of ancient arguments (such as the interpretation of Genesis) and other, newer arguments of a rationalist stamp. Though she accepts that men and women have different inclinations and different social commitments, she rebels against the reasoning that sees their moral and intellectual capacity as distinct and hierarchically different. She also lucidly draws attention to the bias present in supposedly objective discourses, such as those of science or history, which are written by men and silence the merits of women: 'as men are more exposed to the theatre of the world, many of their doings are brought to light, whereas, though there are equally heroic deeds in women, as they do not interest the public they remain buried in oblivion'.²³

²² 'Sabido es que la disputa sobre preferencia o preeminencia de los sexos es uno de los asuntos de conversación más comunes en la sociedad' (*ibid.* 273).

²³ 'como los hombres están más expuestos al teatro del mundo, salen a luz muchas acciones suyas que, aunque en las mujeres las hay igualmente heroicas, como no interesan al público, quedan sepultadas en el olvido' (*ibid.* 284).

In the realm of education, Inés Joyes participates in the Enlightenment criticism of the 'frivolity' of the aristocracy and their imitators and argues for a more solid, more useful education for women to prepare them for carrying out their commitments in the home. However, she does not limit her proposals to the strictly utilitarian and she also contemplates study as a source of satisfactions for women, including the satisfaction of instructive, rational conversation between them or with men (296–297). In this regard, she extends her criticism to education excessively restricted to the domestic sphere, and shares with many other women authors of her time, including Anne-Thérèse Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de Lambert, Louise d'Épinay and Josefa Amar, the pleasure of study and an exhortation to women to make active use of their reason for their personal satisfaction.

Inés Joyes also considers an issue that goes back to classical and Renaissance times and that was revived in the eighteenth century: the value of friendship, considered as a lofty, disinterested feeling, and the debate about whether women were capable of developing it in its highest forms. At the time it was common to consider that in women the power of maternal and conjugal love took away intensity from any other kind of relation, as Antoine-Léonard Thomas stated in his famous essay *Essai sur le caractère, les mœurs et l'esprit des femmes dans les différents siècles* (1772), translated into Spanish in 1773. Arguing against this idea, women authors such as Anne-Thérèse, marquise de Lambert, Émilie du Châtelet or Louise d'Épinay had defended women's capacity for friendship, a feeling to which they attributed great importance in their lives, cultivating it with great devotion in their personal relations. Like them, Inés Joyes declared her sex's disposition for friendship and invited women to find other areas and forms of relation, between themselves and with men, different from the domestic affections that the sentimental literature of the age presented as the only ones that were proper for them.

Indeed, in her writings Inés Joyes maintains a significant distance from the sentimental language so fashionable throughout Europe in the final decades of the eighteenth century. As a daughter of her century she shares a series of concerns about the family and feelings with her contemporaries, but she gives them a particular formulation from her position as a woman. She mistrusts love as a dangerous passion, especially for women, because of the risk to their reputation. Within the logic of the Spanish moralistic discourse of the time, therefore,

Inés Joyes rejects extramarital affairs and the half-amorous, half-courtly relation known as *cortejo*, established between a gentleman and a married lady. However, in doing so, going against what was most usual in the customary criticism of her time, she blames the adulating man more than the woman, whom she urges to free herself from this tiresome and immoral subjection (286). She defends the family as an essential element of social order and a setting in which future citizens may be educated in enlightened values, and she presents it as an area for women's dedication, but not for the realisation of their sentimental nature, as was often suggested in the moral and pedagogical literature, novels and drama of the time.

For Inés Joyes, marriage and the domestic environment are a place where women have particular obligations which are respectable, useful and necessary for society (278–279). But she does not present them as the only or fundamental resource for women's happiness, which she invites them to find also in friendship and the use of reason. Nor as an unavoidable setting, for, like Josefa Amar, she defends the social utility and dignity of women who have not married, whether by their own decision or by force of circumstances (287–288). In her reflections, unlike what is customary in sentimental literature, marriage and the family don't appear as a blissful setting, but, in more realistic terms, as spaces where, in spite of all precautions, conjugal dissensions can arise and cause sufferings from which it is more difficult for women to escape than men, who have broader social horizons (289). The family circle so often described in the literature of the century as 'small and perfect' appears in Inés Joyes's reflection as a circle that can become stifling and unsatisfactory.

Thus marriage appears as a relation constructed for men and women on the basis of different, unequal demands, an inequality which she accepts, to a certain extent, with regard to the distribution of areas and responsibilities; but she rejects it indignantly in the sphere of moral standards, which she would like to be less unbalanced for the two sexes. Reacting against the double sexual morality implicit in the medical discourse and the society of the time, which blamed mothers severely if they did not adopt the profile of the domestic mother, fully devoted to her children while tolerating men's sexual infidelities, she denounces the contradiction between the different efforts of renunciation and morality demanded of men and of women (293–295).

Conclusion

Inés Joyes's biography and work reveals to us some of the intellectual strategies employed by eighteenth-century women who, without belonging to the more brilliant, better-known milieu of the enlightened aristocracy, represent the emergence of a new figure in Spain, that of the middle-class woman writer. Straddling two centuries, her concerns are rooted in moral discourse and gender debate as it was presented in the Enlightenment, without any anticipation of a Romanticism which was barely visible on the horizon at the time and which seems to have no part in her own intellectual attitude. Much time was to pass and many intellectual and political changes were to take place before the burgeoning of women writers in the years between 1835 and 1850, so well studied by Susan Kirkpatrick: women who based their literary activity on Romantic poetics and ideology, which considered poetry a free, spontaneous expression of sensible subjectivity, and therefore accepted (and at the same time limited) women's writing because they were considered 'naturally' close to the world of emotions and less constrained by a formal education.²⁴ The analysis that has been undertaken, in recent years, of the life and work of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century women writers, such as Margarita Hickey, María Gertrudis Hore, María Rosa Gálvez, Francisca Larrea and others, will make it possible to attain a better understanding of the cultural transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism and liberalism, and its implications for women's writing and public presence in the literary field.

Furthermore, as in the case for other countries, it is not possible to understand completely the literary activity and legitimization strategies of Spanish women writers without taking into account the broader context of European culture and literature. More specifically, in this instance, without paying attention to the output and circulation of those men and women authors who contributed directly or indirectly to the debate about gender difference and relations during the eighteenth century. The example of Inés Joyes is especially interesting in this regard. Living in a small town in the provinces, she was able to

²⁴ Kirkpatrick S., *Las Románticas: Women Writers and Subjectivity in Spain, 1835–1850* (Berkeley: 1989), and "Liberales y románticas", in Morant I. (ed.), *Historia de las mujeres en España y América Latina*, vol. 3 (Madrid: 2006) 119–141.

write a bold essay about the condition of women which engaged in an explicit or implicit dialogue with the controversies of her time and especially with the work of other European women writers, from Anne-Thérèse, marquise de Lambert, to Mary Wollstonecraft. But she also succeeded in using the practice of translation to her advantage and, by publishing, in conjunction with her own work, a Spanish version of an author not explicitly aligned in defence of women, she was able to extract what we might call the 'feminist resonances' of the translated text. This case, like others that still remain to be investigated, shows how a transnational analysis can provide a better understanding of the literary and intellectual practices of the Age of Enlightenment and of women's participation in them.

Selective Bibliography

- BASSNET S., "Influence and Intertextuality: A Reappraisal", *Forum for Modern Languages Studies* 43, 2 (2007) 134–146.
- BOLUFER M., "Women of Letters in Eighteenth-Century Spain. Between Tradition and Modernity", in Jaffe C.M. – Lewis E.F. (eds.), *Eve's Enlightenment. Women's Experience in Spain and Spanish America, 1726–1839* (Baton Rouge: 2009) 17–32.
- , *La vida y la escritura en el siglo XVIII. Inés Joyes: 'Apología de las mujeres'* (Valencia: 2008).
- , "Pedagogía y moral en el Siglo de las Luces: las escritoras francesas y su recepción en España", *Revista de Historia Moderna* 20 (2002) 251–291.
- , *Mujeres e Ilustración. La construcción de la feminidad en la España del siglo XVIII* (Valencia: 1998).
- DEACON P., "La novela inglesa en la España del siglo XVIII: fortuna y adversidades", in *Actas del I Congreso Internacional sobre novela del siglo XVIII* (Almería: 1998) 125–139.
- DONAIRE M.L. – LAFARGA F. (eds.), *Traducción y adaptación cultural. España-Francia* (Oviedo: 1991).
- GARCÍA GARROSA M.J., "La creación literaria femenina en la España del siglo XVIII: un estado de la cuestión", in Nava Rodríguez T. (ed.), *Cambio social y ficción literaria en la España de Moratín* (Madrid: 2007) 203–218.
- JAFFE C., "From *The Female Quixote* to *Don Quijote con faldas*: Translation and Transculturation", *Dieciocho* 28, 2 (2005) 120–126.
- KEMMERER K., *'A Neutral Being Between the Sexes': Johnson's Sexual Politics* (Lewisburg: 1998).
- LAFARGA F. (ed.), *La traducción en España (1750–1830): libro, literatura y cultura* (Lleida: 1999).
- LÓPEZ-CORDÓN M.V., "La fortuna de escribir. Escritoras de los siglos XVII y XVIII", in Morant I. (ed.), *Historia de las mujeres en España y América Latina*, vol. 2 (Madrid: 2005) 193–234.
- , "Traducciones y traductoras en la España de finales del siglo XVIII", in Segura C. – Nielfa G. (eds.), *Entre la marginación y el desarrollo. Mujeres y hombres en la Historia* (Madrid: 1996) 89–112.
- SMITH T.A., *The Emerging Female Citizen. Gender and Enlightenment in Spain* (Berkeley: 2006).
- , "Writing Out of the Margins: Women, Translation, and the Spanish Enlightenment", *Journal of Women's History* 15, 1 (2003) 116–143.

'NOUS VOUDRIONS QUE LES FEMMES S'OCCUPENT DE LA LITTÉRATURE':¹ TRADUCTIONS DES ROMANCIÈRES FRANÇAISES EN RUSSIE AUTOUR DE 1800

Elena Gretchanaia

La présence des femmes dans le champ littéraire russe a pour origine l'ouverture de la Russie vers le monde occidental au XVIII^e siècle, à la suite des réformes de Pierre le Grand et de la laïcisation de la culture russe. Dans la deuxième moitié de ce siècle, la production féminine – celle d'écrivaines européennes aussi bien que russes – vient occuper une place de plus en plus marquante sur le marché et dans la littérature russes. En même temps, les femmes deviennent des lectrices assidues de textes laïcs.² L'impératrice Catherine II (1729–1796), arrivée au pouvoir en 1762, fournit elle-même un exemple majeur de la lecture et de la création féminines.³ Elle rédige et publie, en français et en russe, des pièces de théâtre, des contes, des ouvrages historiques et politiques, à côté de sa vaste correspondance qui a pour but d'établir un dialogue avec l'Europe. C'est pendant son règne que les femmes russes se profilent progressivement comme auteures.⁴ De la même manière que leurs compatriotes mâles, elles s'orientent vers les modèles européens qui sont marqués par une présence féminine,

¹ Makarov P., "Quelques pensées des éditeurs du Mercure", *Moskovskii Merkouriï* 4, 1 (1803) 10. Cette recherche a bénéficié du soutien financier de l'Académie des sciences de Russie dans le cadre du Programme "Traductions d'œuvres littéraires et littérature populaire".

² Voir Lotman Y.M., *Bessedy o rousskoï koulture. Byt i traditsii rousskogo dvorianstva. XVIII – nachalo XIX veka* (Entretiens sur la culture russe. Vie quotidienne et traditions de la noblesse russe. XVIII – début du XIX^e siècle) (Saint-Petersbourg: 1997) 49–56.

³ Voir Hoogenboom H., "Catherine the Great and her several Memoirs", in Hoogenboom H. – Cruse M. (eds), *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great. A new translation* (New York: 2005) ix–lxix.

⁴ Voir Heldt B., *Terrible Perfection. Women and Russian Literature* (Bloomington – Indianapolis: 1987); Ledkovsky M. – Rosenthal Ch. – Zirin M. (eds.), *Dictionary of Russian Women Writers* (Westport – London: 1994); Rosslyn W., *Anna Bunina (1774–1829) and the Origins of Women's Poetry in Russia* (Lewiston – Queenston – Lampeter: 1997); Rosslyn W., "Feats of Agreeable Usefulness: Translations by Russian Women. 1763–1825", in Göpfert F. (ed.), *FrauenLiteraturGeschichte. Texte und Materialien zur russischen Frauenliteratur* 13 (Fichtenwalde: 2000).

à la différence de la culture de l'Ancienne Russie où les femmes ne jouaient aucun rôle actif.

Le grand nombre de romans dus aux plumes d'auteures *françaises*, et importés en Russie, constitue notamment un des aspects les plus surprenants et encore très mal cernés. Il est bien connu que Germaine de Staël⁵ et George Sand⁶ ont été abondamment accueillies en Russie, aussi bien dans les milieux littéraires qu'ailleurs.⁷ Mais la grande vogue des autres écrivaines françaises auprès des lecteurs russes, au XVIII^e et durant le premier quart du XIX^e siècle, n'a pratiquement pas fait l'objet d'étude. Cependant leur production – très souvent traduite vers le russe – constitue un élément important de la formation en Russie du champ littéraire.

Cet article se propose de documenter cette présence de romans 'féminins' français à partir de témoignages de leur réception : inventaires de bibliothèques, listes de 'livres envoyés à la campagne', mémoires et autres égodocuments, qui dans certains cas sont encore très peu connus comme sources notamment en dehors de la Russie. À partir de ces documents il est parfois possible d'esquisser les profils de lecteurs et de lectrices. Cela devra permettre d'aborder la question du rôle des romancières françaises dans le développement de la littérature russe – y compris féminine.

Expansion de la Culture Française en Russie

Vers la fin du XVII^e siècle, la culture russe commence à se développer en contact étroit avec les cultures européennes : allemande, française, anglaise, italienne. Si, dans la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle, la présence allemande prédomine, l'intérêt porté à la culture française

⁵ Zaborov P.R., "Germaine de Staël i rousskaia literatoura pervoy treti XIX veka" (Germaine de Staël et la littérature russe du premier tiers du XIX^e siècle), in *Rannie romanticheskie veiania* (Leningrad : 1972) 168–221.

⁶ Kafanova O.B., *George Sand i rousskaia literatoura XIX veka. 1830–1860. Mify i realnost'* (George Sand et la littérature russe du XIX^e siècle. 1830–1860. Mythes et réalités) (Tomsk : 1998); Genevray F., *George Sand et ses contemporains russes : audience, échos, réécritures* (Paris : 2000); Kafanova O.B. – Sokolova M.V., *George Sand v Rossii : Bibliografiia rousskikh perevodov i kriticheskoi literatoury na rousskom yazyke. 1832–1900* (George Sand en Russie : Bibliographie des traductions et des jugements critiques russes. 1832–1900) (Moscou : 2005).

⁷ Ce sont surtout les milieux littéraires qui ont été étudiés.

va l'emporter progressivement.⁸ La langue française, qui se répand au XVIII^e siècle en Europe, fait aussi des progrès rapides en Russie. Dès 1731, le français est enseigné au Corps des Cadets nobles (une école pour les jeunes gens nobles, ouverte cette même année à Saint-Pétersbourg).⁹ Après l'ouverture, en 1755, de l'Université de Moscou, cet établissement deviendra le centre de l'enseignement du français. Si pourtant l'éducation des jeunes gens et des jeunes filles issus de la noblesse et du milieu des marchands est, généralement, dispensée à la maison, ce sont des précepteurs et des instituteurs étrangers, en premier lieu français et suisses, qui l'assurent. Le français devient la langue de la noblesse (qui constitue à l'époque 1,5% de la population russe), surtout de l'élite aristocratique, mais des roturiers et les enfants des marchands l'apprennent aussi fréquemment.¹⁰ La connaissance du français est un élément important de l'éducation des femmes, qui sont généralement plus nombreuses que les hommes à maîtriser cette langue,¹¹ et notamment à le lire.

C'est dans les années 1730 que commence l'importation systématique de livres français en Russie et, déjà à cette époque, toute la littérature francophone provenant de la France, de la Hollande, de l'Angleterre et d'autres pays européens est en vente en Russie.¹² Vers la même époque commence aussi la traduction des œuvres de la littérature européenne. On traduit, pour l'essentiel, des deux langues principales: de l'allemand, qui ayant été la langue la plus répandue garde encore ses positions, et du français, qui va devenir la langue à partir de laquelle s'effectue la majorité des traductions russes.¹³

⁸ Haumant É., *La culture française en Russie (1700–1900)* (Paris: 1913); Brunot F., *Histoire de la langue française des origines à nos jours*, tome VIII. *Le français hors de France au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 1934) 489–529; Lübenow M., *Französische Kultur in Russland. Entwicklungslinien in Geschichte und Literatur* (Cologne – Weimar – Vienne: 2002); Poussou J.P. – Mézin A. – Perret-Gentil Y. (éds.), *L'Influence française en Russie au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 2004).

⁹ Voir Rjeoutski V., “La langue française en Russie au siècle des Lumières: éléments pour une histoire sociale”, in Haskins Gonthier U. – Sandrier A. (éds.), *Multilinguisme et multiculturalité dans l'Europe des Lumières. Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Enlightenment Europe. Actes du séminaire international des jeunes dix-huitiémistes. 2004* (Paris: 2007) 101–125.

¹⁰ Kopaniev N.A., *Frantsouzskaja kniga i rousskaia koultoura v seredine XVIII veka* (Le livre français et la culture russe au milieu du XVIII^e siècle) (Leningrad: 1988) 119–121.

¹¹ Voir Pushkareva N., *Women in Russian History: from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century* (New-York: 1997) 166–168.

¹² Kopaniev N.A., *Frantsouzskaja kniga i rousskaia koultoura v seredine XVIII veka*.

¹³ Voir Barenbaum I.E., “Frantsouzskaja perevodnaia khoudojestvennaia literatura v Rossii” (Traductions des œuvres littéraires françaises en Russie), in Zaitseva

La fin du XVIII^e siècle voit s'accroître encore la présence française en Russie : plusieurs émigrés français sont accueillis et s'installent dans les maisons des nobles russes.¹⁴ Au début du règne d'Alexandre I^{er} (1801–1825), la Russie mène des campagnes contre la France napoléonienne, et ses armées font leur entrée à Paris : c'est la période des contacts les plus dramatiques mais aussi les plus intenses entre les deux pays. À partir des années 1830, l'importance de la civilisation française paraît diminuer à cause de l'affermissement du nationalisme russe lors du règne de Nicolas I^{er} (1825–1855), mais la langue française reste encore longtemps présente en Russie.

Comme en témoignent les catalogues de bibliothèques, les gens cultivés avaient pris l'habitude de lire la production française dans l'original : les ouvrages en français prédominent dans les bibliothèques privées de la noblesse et des hommes de lettres.¹⁵ Les cabinets de lecture, qui apparaissent à Pétersbourg dans les années 1780 et sont orientés vers un public cultivé, disposent d'un petit nombre de livres en russe, privilégiant la production en français et en allemand. Dans les premières années du XIX^e siècle, jusqu'à 1813, aucun cabinet de lecture ne propose de livres en russe – ni originaux ni traduits.¹⁶

Cependant des ouvrages littéraires traduits en russe sont présents dans les bibliothèques russes *privées* du XVIII^e siècle, y compris dans celles où la production en français prédomine. Ainsi, le catalogue actuellement disparu de la bibliothèque (elle-même disparue aussi) du général Alekseï Demidov contenait des traductions russes d'auteurs français.¹⁷ Voltaire et Marmontel figurent – traduits – dans la biblio-

A.A. (ed), *Kniga v Rossii XVII – natchala XIX veka* (Le livre en Russie aux XVII^e – début du XIX^e siècle) (Leningrad : 1989) 139.

¹⁴ Pingaud L., *Les Français en Russie et les Russes en France. L'ancien régime, l'émigration, les invasions* (Paris : 1886).

¹⁵ C'est ce que montrent, par exemple, des catalogues conservés des bibliothèques des comtes Cheremetev, des comtes Vorontsov, du poète Mikhaïl Mouraviev, du militaire Alexandre Kazadaev et d'autres gens nobles et écrivains, voir Zaïtseva A.A. (ed), *Kniga v Rossii. XVI – serecina XIX veka* (Livre en Russie. XVI – milieu du XIX^e siècle) (Leningrad : 1987) 96–101; Zaïtseva A.A. (ed.), *Kniga v Rossii v epokhu Prosvechchenia* (Livre en Russie au siècle des Lumières) (Leningrad : 1988) 113–127.

¹⁶ Zaïtseva A.A., “Kabinety dlia tchтения' v Sankt-Peterbourge kontsa XVIII – natchala XIX veka” (“Cabinets de lecture” à Saint-Petersbourg à la fin du XVIII^e – début du XIX^e siècle), in Zaïtseva A.A. (ed.), *Rousskie biblioteki i tchastnyie knižnyie sobrania XVI-XIX vekov* (Leningrad : 1979) 29–44.

¹⁷ Ivask U.G., *Tchastnyie biblioteki v Rossii* (Bibliothèques privées en Russie) (Saint-Petersbourg : 1912) 14.

thèque (fin XVIII^e siècle) d'Afanassii Briantchaninov, lieutenant en retraite qui résidait à Vologda (dans le nord de la Russie).¹⁸ Andreï Bolotov (1738–1833), un gentilhomme de province, écrivain et moraliste, auteur de mémoires, lisait des traductions : il a laissé un recueil manuscrit en russe intitulé *Pensées et avis impartiaux sur des romans, tant russes que traduits des langues étrangères* (1791), où il juge 50 œuvres dont 46 traductions.¹⁹ Des traductions des ouvrages de Jean-Jacques Rousseau et de Madame Guyon sont présentes dans la bibliothèque d'une famille de marchands de Moscou du XVIII^e – début du XIX^e siècle.²⁰

Une liste de *Livres envoyés à la campagne l'année 1797*, qui figure dans le journal d'une jeune fille noble de Moscou, Ekaterina Tchirikova (plus tard épouse Kvachnina-Samarina, vers 1780–1836), comporte 36 titres en français (y compris d'œuvres traduites de l'anglais et de l'allemand) et seulement deux titres en russe :²¹ l'un concerne les œuvres du poète russe Vasilii Kapnist, tandis que l'autre renvoie à la traduction (1794) des contes de Marmontel par le plus grand écrivain russe de l'époque, Nikolai Karamzine. Outre l'intérêt pour les écrits de Karamzine, évident dans le journal de Tchirikova, la présence de ce titre atteste la lecture, même si elle n'est qu'épisodique, de traductions russes.

Enfin, ce sont des éditions et des rééditions fréquentes des œuvres traduites qui témoignent de l'intérêt que leur portait le public russe. Ainsi, les traductions d'œuvres de Voltaire sont rééditées, dans la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle, 100 fois, celles de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 36 fois, celles de Marmontel, 33 fois ; celles de Baculard d'Arnaud, 30 fois ; celles de l'abbé Prévost, 16 fois,²² d'après le catalogue général de Kondakov recensant les livres imprimés.

¹⁸ Martynov N.F., "Provintsialnyie knigoluby XVIII veka" (Amateurs de livres en province au XVIII^e siècle), in Zaïtseva A.A. (ed.), *Rousskie biblioteki i tchastnyie knižnyie sobrania XVI–XIX vekov* 136.

¹⁹ Morozov I., Koutcherov A., "Iz neizdannogo literaturnogo nasledia Bolotova" (Écrits inédits de Bolotov), in *Literaturnoie nasledstvo* 9–10 (Moscou : 1933) 191–21.

²⁰ *Biblioteka Semena Dmitrievitcha Syreichtchikova. Katalog* (Bibliothèque de Semione Dmitrievitch Syreichtchikov. Katalog) (Oulianovsk : 1995).

²¹ Gretchanaia E. – Viollet C. (éds), *Si tu lis jamais ce journal : diaristes russes francophones. 1780–1854*, (Paris : 2008) 127–131.

²² D'après Kondakov I.P. (ed.), *Svodnyi katalog russkikh knig grajdanskoï pečhati XVIII veka (1708–1800)* (Catalogue général des livres imprimés en langue russe au XVIII^e siècle. 1708–1800), 5 vol. et *Supplément* (Moscou : 1962–1975).

Traductions d'Œuvres de Femmes

La traduction d'écrits 'féminins' commence par des ouvrages pédagogiques: en 1732, dans un périodique de l'Académie des sciences, est publiée la traduction du célèbre ouvrage d'Anne-Thérèse de Lambert (1647–1733), *Avis d'une mère à son fils et à sa fille* (1727).²³ En 1761, cette traduction reparait sous forme de livre.²⁴ Dans la préface, le traducteur anonyme²⁵ souligne la nécessité, pour les femmes, d'acquérir des connaissances, notamment en matière de sciences, car 'beaucoup d'étrangères éclairées furent utiles pour la société'.²⁶ Un appel est lancé aux femmes russes pour suivre l'exemple de Lambert et se tourner vers les sciences et les arts. Cependant, là où la marquise conseillait aux jeunes filles d'apprendre le latin, la traduction propose, dans une note, de remplacer le latin par 'le français et l'allemand, qui sont actuellement absolument nécessaires' pour pouvoir lire 'un grand nombre de nouveaux livres écrits avec beaucoup d'art'.²⁷

D'autres textes éducatifs suivent, notamment ceux de Jeanne Leprince de Beaumont (1711–1780), dont les plus répandus dans toute l'Europe: le *Magasin des enfants* (1756) et le *Magasin des adolescentes* (1760). Ils sont traduits et publiés en Russie respectivement trois et deux fois entre 1761 et 1795. Comme l'indique l'ouvrage de Kondakov, qui mentionne aussi les tirages, ceux-ci sont même plus importants que ceux du texte de Lambert qui comptait 1200 exemplaires: pour Leprince de Beaumont ils atteignent les 2000.²⁸

²³ Levin Y.D. (ed.), *Istoria rousskoy perevodnoy khoudojestvennoy literatoury. Drevniaia Rous'. XVIII vek* (Histoire de la traduction d'œuvres littéraires en Russie. Ancienne Russie. XVIII^e siècle) 1 (Saint-Petersbourg: 1995) 113.

²⁴ Tiré à 1200 exemplaires, un tirage très élevé qu'atteignent à l'époque les traductions du *Zadig* (1766) et du *Candide* (1769) de Voltaire, ainsi que la traduction du *Bélisaire* de Marmontel (1768), effectuée par Catherine II et son entourage.

²⁵ Masculin: il n'y avait pas de femmes parmi les traducteurs de l'Académie des sciences.

²⁶ *Pis'ma Gospoji de Lambert k eya synu o pravednoi tchesti i k dotcheri o dobrodeteliakh prilichnykh jenskomu polu* (Lettres de Madame de Lambert à son fils, sur l'honnêteté, et à sa fille, sur des vertus convenables au sexe féminin) (Saint-Petersbourg: 1761) (la préface n'est pas paginée).

²⁷ *Pis'ma Gospoji de Lambert* 106.

²⁸ Je m'appuie sur les catalogues suivants: Kondakov I.P. (ed.), *Svodnyĭ katalog russkikh knig grajdanskoĭ pečhati XVIII veka (1708–1800)*; Fomenko I.Y. (ed.), *Svodnyĭ katalog rousskoĭ knigi. 1801–1825* (Catalogue général des livres russes, 1801–1825), 2 vol. (Moscou: 2000, 2007).

A partir des années 1760, les romans prennent le dessus. Ces traductions sont, elles aussi, publiées dans les imprimeries de l'Université de Moscou, du Corps noble des cadets et de l'Académie des sciences. Les traducteurs gardent souvent l'anonymat : peut-être s'agit-il alors de traductrices ? Toujours est-il que les traductions signées appartiennent le plus souvent à des hommes. Ce sont pour la plupart des amateurs, qui occupent diverses positions sociales (fonctionnaires, propriétaires terriens, militaires de grades inférieurs, étudiants et professeurs de l'Université de Moscou et du Corps noble des cadets). Quelques femmes figurent aussi parmi les traducteurs, mais elles traduisent très rarement des romans ; ce sont plutôt des ouvrages considérés comme plus sérieux : textes pédagogiques, moraux, historiques, spirituels. Cela est lié aux doutes concernant la compatibilité de ces activités avec l'image de la femme.²⁹

Lectures Divertissantes et Sentimentales, et Visibilité des Auteures

En 1761, Evstigneï Kharlamov, directeur du Corps des cadets, publie la première traduction d'un roman 'féminin'. C'est le roman galant de Marie-Louise-Charlotte de Fontaines (1660–1730), *La constance à toute épreuve, ou Les aventures de la comtesse de Savoye*. Le nom de l'auteure, 'Madame de Fontaines', présent dans l'original français, est absent dans la traduction. Le tirage est de 1000 exemplaires. Ce texte est tiré apparemment de la très populaire *Bibliothèque de campagne, ou Amusements de l'esprit et du cœur* (1742), où il figure sous ce titre, qui correspond à celui de la traduction russe, tandis qu'à la première publication en 1726, il s'intitulait *Histoire de la comtesse de Savoye*. Cette première traduction d'un roman féminin français contient déjà comme un programme à suivre : plusieurs œuvres d'écrivaines seront par la suite choisies en fonction premièrement de leur caractère divertissant.

Ainsi le même Kharlamov publie en 1764 la traduction de *Gustave Vasa, histoire de Suède, par Mlle de Caumont de la Force* (1698 ; incluse sous ce titre, en 1735, dans la *Bibliothèque de campagne, ou Amusements de l'esprit et du cœur*), sous le titre russe plus alléchant de *Génie héroïque et délassements amoureux de Gustave Vasa, roi de Suède*. Cette histoire galante de Charlotte-

²⁹ Voir Rosslyn W., *Feats of Agreeable Usefulness: Translations by Russian Women, 1763–1825* 67–90.

Rose de Caumont La Force (1650–1724) dut plaire aux lecteurs russes, car en 1780 et 1781 suivent deux éditions de la traduction (par un anonyme) de l'*Histoire secrète des amours de Henri IV, roi de Castille*, publiée en 1695 sans nom d'auteur, et incluse, en 1736, dans la *Bibliothèque de campagne* avec cette mention: 'par Mlle de La Force'. Le nom de l'auteure n'est d'ailleurs jamais indiqué dans les traductions russes, probablement de crainte de choquer le lecteur par l'exemple d'une femme qui s'éloigne à ce point de la modestie prescrite à son sexe.

La tradition de la littérature galante est reprise dans la traduction de *La Femme ermite* de la Marquise de Lambert, une nouvelle incluse dans ses *Œuvres*, publiées après sa mort (en 1747), et rééditées en 1748, 1751 et 1761. Cette traduction anonyme est due à une femme (la forme du verbe russe indique le sexe du sujet), elle paraît en 1765 sous le titre *Une femme retirée du monde*.³⁰ Le nom de Madame de Lambert est présent dans le titre russe. Après les traductions des écrits pédagogiques de la marquise de Lambert, cette fois le choix tombe donc sur un texte romanesque, contenant les péripéties amoureuses d'une noble héroïne dans une ambiance galante.

On traduit volontiers, dans la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle, des œuvres dans le goût de l'exotisme et les contes de fée écrits par des femmes: *La Chatte blanche* et *L'Oranger et l'abeille* (1762) de Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (1650–1705), traduites en 1779; *Mourat et Turquia, histoire africaine* (1752), de Marguerite de Lubert (1702?–1779?), traduite en 1780 par un noble de province, Vassilii Priklonskii; *Le prince des Aigues Marines et le prince invisible, contes* (1744), de Louise Levesque (1703–1745), qui paraissent en russe en 1780 et 1793; les *Contes du sérail, traduits du turc* (1753), publiés en russe en 1768 et réédités en 1781, et *Abbassaï, histoire orientale* (1753), publiés en 1780–1781, de Marianne-Agnès de Fauques (1720?–1785?); *Żély, ou la difficulté d'être heureux, roman indien* de Madame de Fourqueux (dates de vie inconnues), dont la version russe paraît en 1780; *Les Pensées errantes, avec quelques lettres d'un Indien* de Madame de Benouville (dates de vie inconnues), traduites en 1778. Andreï Bolotov apprécie, selon ses *Pensées et avis*, la moralité

³⁰ *Oudalivchaisia ot sveta jenchtchina: Novaia povest', sotchinemaia g. marquisoiu de Lambert. Perevodila s frantsouzskogo* ** (Une femme retirée du monde: une nouvelle nouvelle, composée par Mme la marquise de Lambert. Traduit du français par **) ([Moscou]: [1765]).

de *Zély, ou la difficulté d'être heureux*, mais ne sait pas que son auteur est une femme.³¹

En effet, très souvent le 'gender' de ces romancières françaises n'est pas indiqué. Ce n'est que pour Madame de Benouville que le titre mentionne la féminité de l'auteure. Les autres traductions n'indiquent ni le nom, ni le sexe de l'auteure de l'original. Ce fait s'explique en partie parce que le nom n'avait pas été mentionné dans l'original français. C'est le cas pour les œuvres de Levesque, de Fauques, de Fourqueux (parfaitement inconnues d'ailleurs pour nous actuellement). Cependant dans les publications françaises, même si les noms des auteures sont omis, les titres mentionnent souvent que l'ouvrage est écrit par 'Madame' ou 'Mademoiselle'. Ainsi, les deux éditions de la traduction du roman de Marie-Anne Robert (1705–1771) *La paysanne philosophe* (1761), dont le titre français indique : *par Madame de R.R.* [Roumier Robert], ne mentionnent aucune identité de l'auteure. *Les amans philosophes, ou le triomphe de la raison, par mademoiselle B**** (1753) de Jacqueline-Aimée Brohon (1731–1778) est réédité trois fois en russe, sans que transpire l'identité de l'auteure. Visiblement, dans le cas des *minores*, qui pourvoient des œuvres constituant la littérature populaire, on n'insiste pas, dans les traductions, sur l'appartenance de ces auteures au genre féminin. Le titre et le genre littéraire s'avèrent, en général, être plus importants à l'époque que le nom de l'auteur, surtout quand il est peu connu.³²

Mais dans cette littérature féminine on puise aussi des textes exaltant la vie du cœur et les sentiments perçus comme honorables. Pour les traductions d'ouvrages de ce genre, le nom ou le sexe de l'auteure figurent plus systématiquement dans les titres russes. Ainsi, en 1788, on traduit le roman de Charlotte de Bournon-Malarme (1753–1830?) *Tout est possible à l'amitié* (1786), en mentionnant que cette histoire a été 'publiée en français par Mme Malart' (sic). En 1790, on traduit *l'Histoire du cœur, par Mademoiselle de Milly* (1768, l'auteure est inconnue), en gardant correctement tous les éléments du titre français. En 1772, les deux traductions, dont l'une par une femme anonyme, du *Traité de l'amitié* de la marquise de Lambert, indiquent le nom de l'auteure non sans rapport, bien sûr, avec la célébrité de ce nom.

³¹ Morozov I. – Koutcherov A., "Iz neizdannogo literatournogo nasledia Bolotova" 217–218.

³² Marker G., *Publishing, Printing and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700-1800* 202–204, 207.

Dans les années 1760 aussi paraissent, à côté de romans par de relatives inconnues, les premières traductions de romans écrits par des écrivaines célèbres à l'époque, telles que Madeleine-Angélique de Gomez (1684–1770), Claudine-Alexandrine de Tencin (1685–1749), Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni (1713–1792), Françoise de Graffigny (1695–1758) et Louise d'Épinay (1726–1783). Leurs noms sont généralement indiqués dans les titres des traductions, apparemment pour attirer le public.

En 1764, quatre nouvelles de Gomez sont publiées en russe, parmi lesquelles *L'Histoire du comte d'Oxford et de Miledy d'Herby* (1737), qui fait partie de ses *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* (1731–1739). La traduction est due à une jeune fille, Anna Veliacheva-Volyntseva, dont le nom figure également dans le titre. Son tirage est de 1200 exemplaires. Deux autres nouvelles de Gomez, *Les illustres ennemis* et *l'Histoire de don Alvare de Pardo*, réunies sous le titre *L'amour est plus fort que l'amitié* (1764) sont tirées à 1000 exemplaires. Entre 1764 et 1792, les diverses nouvelles de Gomez sont éditées quatorze fois y compris leur publication en dix volumes, en 1765–1768. Rappelons que c'est toujours un nombre moins grand que pour certains romanciers hommes.

Dans la préface au premier volume de la traduction des *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, l'éditeur anonyme écrit que les 'œuvres de Madame Gomez en langue française sont fort louées par le public', c'est pourquoi il veut 'faire plaisir aux lecteurs, qui pensent à un joyeux passe-temps'.³³ Entre la langue source et la langue cible, les titres des versions russes subissent souvent, de ce fait, des transformations spectaculaires: on veut captiver le public et répondre aux attentes de sa sensibilité, 'engagée' dans la lecture des romans.³⁴ Ainsi *Les effets de l'amitié* (1735) de Gomez, est traduite, en 1789, comme: *Un Romain tombé amoureux, ou la Vie heureuse des amis. Histoire de Léonore de Valesco. Sa Nouvelle espagnole* (1731) paraît, en 1791, sous le titre *La Fidélité triomphante, ou les Aventures de deux amants qui ont traversé beaucoup de malheurs et gardé leur amour inaltérable: Nouvelle espagnole*.

Le même procédé est appliqué à la traduction des *Mémoires du comte de Comminge* de Claudine-Alexandrine de Tencin (1735), publié sous

³³ *Sto novykh novostei, sotchinenia G-ji Gomez* (Cent nouvelles nouvelles, œuvres de Mme Gomez) 1 (Saint-Petersbourg: 1765) (la préface n'est pas paginée; ici et plus loin c'est moi qui traduis du russe).

³⁴ Cavallo G. – Chartier R., "Introduction", in Cavallo G. – Chartier R. (éds.), *Histoire de la lecture dans le monde occidental* (Paris: 2001) 36.

le titre russe *Les amants malheureux, ou les Aventures véritables du comte de Comminge, remplies des événements vraiment à plaindre, et qui touchent des cœurs tendres* (1771). Par ailleurs, la publication des *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* de Graffigny (1747), dans une série intitulée *Bibliothèque amusante* (1791), témoigne une fois de plus de cette insertion des romans féminins dans le cadre de la lecture divertissante.

Outre le côté divertissant, plusieurs œuvres féminines sont prisées car elles semblent convenir 'aux jeunes filles', comme l'écrit, en 1786, le romancier russe Nikolai Emine, à propos des romans de Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, qu'il approuve autant que des romanciers comme Marmontel ou Richardson, et qu'il compare à l'Allemande Sophie von La Roche.³⁵ En 1765 paraît la première traduction de Riccoboni, par Boris Yeltchaninov, dramaturge d'origine noble. Il traduit le premier roman riccobonien, devenu célèbre en Europe, *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd à Milord Charles Alfred de Caitombridge* (1757). L'exemplaire conservé à la Bibliothèque d'État russe comporte une inscription : '[ce livre] appartient à la collection du major en second Vassiliï Tumenev, [il a été] acheté à la registratrice [femme du registrateur] Matrona Efrosimova le 20 décembre 1785'. Ces noms sont révélateurs : ce ne sont pas ceux de la haute noblesse, et la position sociale de ces propriétaires suggère que le texte de Riccoboni circulait dans un milieu relativement modeste.³⁶

Son oeuvre continue à être traduite. En 1772–1773, ce sont les deux premières et en 1785 la troisième partie d'*Amélie*, roman de Fielding qui avait été traduit voire adapté par Riccoboni (1762). En 1779 paraît en russe son grand roman *Histoire de miss Jenny* (1764), mais le traducteur ou la traductrice n'a retenu que la troisième partie, intitulée "Histoire de milady comtesse d'Anglesey". En 1783 c'est l'*Histoire d'Enguerrand, ou rencontre dans la forêt des Ardennes*, traduite à partir de la version de la *Bibliothèque universelle des romans* en 1779–1780, sous le titre des *Annales de Champagne*. Cette traduction est rééditée en 1786. En 1788 on publie l'*Histoire de deux jeunes amies*, qui avait paru dans le *Mercure de France* en 1786. Cette traduction, intitulée en russe *Une fille retrouvée, ou les Aventures de Mademoiselle Artenay et son amie*, est faite d'après la traduction allemande, parue en 1788. Et ce n'est qu'en 1797 que paraît la

³⁵ Levin Y.D. (éd.), *Istoria rousskoy perevodnoy khoudojestvennoy literatoury* 9.

³⁶ Le major en second appartenait, selon l'Échelle hiérarchique, à la neuvième classe, et le registrateur de collège, comme sa femme, à la dernière, quatorzième.

version russe du deuxième roman de Riccoboni *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* (1759). Son traducteur Vassilii Koulitchkine la dédie à Natalia Plechtcheeva (née Veriguina), ancienne demoiselle d'honneur de l'impératrice Maria Fedorovna, épouse de l'empereur Paul Ier.³⁷

Nécessité de la Présence Féminine dans la Littérature

La présence en Russie de Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis (1746–1830) est d'un autre ordre.³⁸ Dès 1779–1780 commence (par son *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes*, 1779) la traduction systématique de ses œuvres. Dans tous les cas on maintient sur la page de titre le nom de 'la très célèbre et réputée par ses ouvrages portant sur l'éducation et autres sujets moraux, comtesse de Genlis'. C'est ainsi qu'on présente l'auteure en 1792 pour la deuxième traduction (la première est publiée en 1791) de son roman *Adèle et Théodore, ou Lettres sur l'éducation* (1782). Dans les années 1780–1790, douze traductions russes de Mme de Genlis, pour la plupart de ses comédies, sont publiées. Au siècle suivant le nombre va en augmentant, et atteint, en 1800–1825, les 58 publications. Genlis semble être la romancière dont les œuvres sont traduites le plus souvent à cette époque en Russie.³⁹

Ce sont en premier lieu les romans que l'on traduit alors, et ces traductions suivent immédiatement ou de près la publication en français. Mentionnons les principales: *Les Vœux téméraires, ou l'Enthousiasme* (1799), 1802, deuxième édition 1820, *La duchesse de La Vallière* (1804), 1804–1805, deuxième édition 1815, une nouvelle traduction en 1815–1816; *Madame de Maintenon, pour servir à l'histoire de la duchesse de La Vallière* (1806), trois traductions: 1806, 1806–1807, 1825; *Alphonsine, ou la tendresse maternelle* (1806), 1806–1807, deuxième édition 1815; *Les chevaliers du Cygne* (1795), 1807–1808, nouvelle traduction 1825; *Bélisaire* (1808), 1808 (deux traductions, parues à Saint-Petersbourg et Moscou); *Le Siège de la Rochelle* (1807), 1808, deux rééditions en 1816; *Alphonse, ou le fils naturel* (1809), 1809 (deux traductions), *Les Petits Émigrés, ou Corres-*

³⁷ Natalia Plechtcheeva, une femme instruite, est connue par son intérêt pour le mysticisme européen.

³⁸ Ces renseignements complètent la bibliographie de Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval, *Bibliographie des écrivains français. Madame de Genlis* (Paris – Rome: 1996) 57–58.

³⁹ La comparaison avec la célèbre romancière anglaise Ann Radcliffe est intéressante: pour celle-ci le nombre ne dépasse pas les cinq (et cinq fois encore paraissent sous son nom des traductions de romans qui ne lui appartiennent pas).

pondance de quelques enfants: ouvrage fait pour servir à l'éducation de la jeunesse (1798), 1811. Après 1825, Genlis n'est traduite qu'une seule fois, en 1871 (*Contes pour les enfants*).

On trouve aussi en traduction plusieurs contemporaines de Genlis. Adélaïde de Souza (1761–1836) est traduite deux fois: *Eugène de Rothelin* (1808) paraît en russe l'année de sa publication en français, et *Émilie et Alphonse, ou dangers de se livrer à ses premières impressions* (1799), en 1818. *Caroline de Lichtfield* (1786) d'Isabelle de Montolieu (1751–1832) est publié en russe en 1800. Le titre n'indique pas son nom, mais seulement que c'est l'ouvrage de Mme ***. Par contre, plus tard, en 1819, on attribue (abusivement) à 'Mme Montolieu, auteur de *Caroline de Lichtfield*', un roman anonyme anglais *Le Château de Courville* (1804). Un autre roman qui eut un succès européen, *Valérie* (1803) de Varvara-Juliana de Krüdener (1764–1824), est traduite en 1807, d'après sa traduction en allemand, parue en 1804.

Il faut dire que comparées à certains écrivains à grand succès, les romancières restent largement en arrière. C'est August von Kotzebue qui tient la première place: dans le premier quart du XIX^e siècle et toujours selon les mêmes sources, ses œuvres sont (ré)éditées en russe 220 fois; ceux d'August Lafontaine 50 fois; et ceux de François-Guillaume Ducray-Duminil 23 fois. Néanmoins la présence en Russie du roman de femmes est importante, dans la mesure où elle s'inscrit dans le programme sentimentaliste. C'est notamment Nikolaï Karamzine, qui souhaite transférer dans son pays la situation française, où il a constaté que les femmes prennent une part active dans la vie de la société. En 1802, dans son article "Pourquoi la Russie manque-t-elle de talents littéraires?", publié dans sa revue *Vestnik Evropy* (Messager de l'Europe), Karamzine met en valeur le rôle des femmes dans la constitution de la langue littéraire.⁴⁰ L'intérêt qu'il porte à la littérature

⁴⁰ Karamzine N.M., "Otchego v Rossii malo avtorskikh talantov?" (Pourquoi la Russie manque-t-elle de talents littéraires?), in Karamzine N.M., *Izbrannye stat'i i pis'ma* (Moscou: 1982), 101–103. Le goût de la femme mondaine est proclamé, par les sentimentalistes, l'arbitre du style littéraire, voir Vinogradov V.V., *Otcherki po istorii roussskogo literatournogo yazyka XVII–XIX vekov* (Essais sur l'histoire de la langue littéraire russe des XVII^e–XIX^e siècles) (Moscou: 1982), 194. Sur la 'féminisation' de la littérature russe à la fin du XVIII^e – début du XIX^e siècle voir aussi: Vowles J., "The 'Feminisation' of Russian Literature: Women, Language and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Russia", in Clyman T.W. – Greene D. (éds.), *Women Writers in Russian Literature* (Westport – London: 1994), 35–60; Hammarberg G., "The Feminine Chronotope and Sentimentalist Canon Formation", in Cross A.G. – Smith G.S. (éds.), *Literature, Lives and Legality in Catherine's Russia* (Nottingham, 1994), 103–120.

féminine française est lié à la valorisation du goût des femmes, dont il avait fait preuve en 1796, dans une *Épître aux femmes*, véritable hymne aux mérites féminins, notamment à la justesse de leur jugement.⁴¹ La même année il avait publié, sous le titre *Melina*, sa traduction de la nouvelle de Germaine de Staël, *Žulma* (1796). ‘Seule une femme sensible peut peindre avec de telles couleurs’, avait écrit Karamzine dans sa présentation de la nouvelle.⁴² Sa traduction (rééditée en 1798 et 1802) est dédiée à Anastassia Plechtcheeva (née Protassova), auteure d’essais littéraires rédigés en français, et contient ainsi un appel implicite à suivre l’exemple de l’écrivaine française. En effet, A. Plechtcheeva publierait plus tard, en 1808, sa traduction du *Magasin des pauvres, artisans, domestiques et gens de campagne* de Jeanne Leprince de Beaumont (1768).⁴³

A côté de Staël, Genlis sert également d’exemple, dans l’esprit de Karamzine. En 1785–1789, il avait fait paraître, dans la revue *Detskoe tchtenie dlia serdtsa i razouma* (Lecture d’enfant pour le cœur et l’esprit), et en 1802–1803 dans le *Messenger de l’Europe*, de nombreuses traductions de ses nouvelles.⁴⁴ En 1816, il les publie en volume ; cette édition contient notamment la nouvelle *La Femme auteur*. Non seulement Karamzine lui-même, mais aussi ses adeptes saluent la présence de Genlis dans la littérature russe. Le goût de cette écrivaine est considéré comme parfait, comme le note en 1803 l’écrivain Piotr Makarov, admirateur de Karamzine et éditeur de la revue *Moskovskii Merkourii* (Mercure de Moscou), dans son compte rendu de la traduction des *Vœux téméraires* :

Sur les champs stériles de la littérature actuelle, toute œuvre de Madame de Genlis est un vrai trésor. Le lecteur se repose enfin en trouvant, dans un long catalogue des livres nouveaux, le nom de cette aimable femme auteur. Il se repose comme un voyageur, qui, dans un immense espace d’une steppe uniforme, voit des traces humaines, une petite chaumière, une jolie petite colline ou un ruisseau à l’ombre de petits buissons agréables. Madame de Genlis appartient à ces auteurs dont il ne faut

⁴¹ Karamzine N.M. – Dmitriev I.I., *Izbrannye sochinenia* (Œuvres choisies) (Leningrad: 1953) 161–171.

⁴² Cité dans: Zaborov P.R., “Germaine de Staël i rousskaia literatoura pervoy treti XIX veka” 169.

⁴³ Rosslyn W., *Feats of Agreeable Usefulness: Translations by Russian Women. 1763–1825* 155.

⁴⁴ Kafanova O.B., “Bibliografia perevodov N.M. Karamzina. 1783–1800” (Bibliographie des traductions de N.M. Karamzine. 1783–1800), *XVIII vek* 16 (1989) 320–322; Kafanova O.B., “Bibliografia perevodov N.M. Karamzina v Vestnike Evropy. 1802–1803” (Bibliographie des traductions de N.M. Karamzine dans le *Messenger de l’Europe*. 1802–1803), *XVIII vek* 17 (1991) 249–283.

attendre rien d'*extraordinaire*, rien de *superbe*, mais qui jamais n'écrivent *mal*. Ses romans médiocres vont toujours plaire, on va toujours les lire avec plaisir. Respectant strictement la bienséance, elle a su donner de la valeur aux moindres actions; chez elle, un seul regard, un seul mot, un seul serrement de main signifient plus, intéressent le lecteur plus que, chez les autres auteurs, le dernier sacrifice à l'amour; elle a connu le monde, et l'a connu très bien, comme peu de gens le connaissent; c'est pourquoi, quand on lit son roman ou sa nouvelle, on a l'impression de voir et d'entendre des gens.⁴⁵

En même temps, Makarov consacre tout un article, dans sa revue, à la question de la place à accorder aux femmes dans la société. Il lie en effet les succès de la littérature française à la participation constante et active des femmes dans la vie culturelle de la France, et exhorte les femmes russes à 'régner sur le champ littéraire' et à 'entraîner tout le monde à leur suite', à visiter les Lycées et les Musées, à 'lire, traduire et écrire elles-mêmes'. Il rejoint Karamzine en déclarant: 'Pour que la langue livresque et la langue de la bonne société soient en accord, nous voudrions que les femmes s'occupent de la littérature; leur goût exquis, leur imagination ardente, leur âme tendre nous font espérer l'apparition, parmi elles, de bonnes auteures'.⁴⁶

D'autres disciples de Karamzine, Nikolai Gretch et surtout Alexandre Izmaïlov, éditeurs de la revue *Syn Otetchestva* (Fils de la Patrie), saluent, en 1815, la traduction de *Mademoiselle de La Fayette*. Ils rappellent que les romans historiques de Genlis sont célèbres et opposent ses œuvres aux romans gothiques à la mode y compris en Russie. La féminité de l'auteur assure, selon les éditeurs du *Fils de la Patrie*, la moralité de ses écrits: 'En tant que femme, elle ne va pas occuper les lecteurs par des contes immoraux et des pensées ambiguës etc., et ses romans peuvent nourrir le cœur et l'esprit plus que des aventures monstrueuses de brigands et de bandits'.⁴⁷ Par contre, les deux traductions simultanées de *La Duchesse de La Vallière* sont accueillies, par le *Fils de la Patrie*, avec des réticences dues à la peinture du 'vice' dans ce roman, même si 'Madame de Genlis s'efforce, en employant tous les moyens, d'embellir et de dissimuler les défauts et les faiblesses de ses héros'.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *Moskovskii Merkouriï* 1, 1 (1803) 60–61.

⁴⁶ "Quelques pensées des éditeurs du Mercure", *Moskovskii Merkouriï* 4, 1 (1803) 6–11.

⁴⁷ *Syn Otetchestva, istoricheskii, politicheskii i literaturnyi journal* (Fils de la Patrie, revue historique, politique et littéraire) 26 (1815) 149.

⁴⁸ *Syn Otetchestva*, 34 (1816) 97.

Le traducteur de *Bélisaire* paru à Pétersbourg, Ivan Zakharov, membre de l'Académie des sciences de Russie, acquitte par contre dans sa préface Madame de Genlis des connotations sexuelles et la met sur un pied d'égalité avec les écrivains célèbres mâles : 'Sa plume, dans *Bélisaire*, n'est pas du tout féminine. Un tableau riche, des pensées sublimes, des sentiments exquis, des expressions charmantes la font, dans cet ouvrage superbe, rivale de Marmontel, disciple de Fénelon'.⁴⁹

Les œuvres de Genlis sont comparées à leur avantage, non seulement avec les romans gothiques, mais aussi avec les romans marqués par une sentimentalité outrée. C'est ce que fait, à la fin du texte russe de *Bélisaire*, l'auteur anonyme de la notice concernant la traduction d'*Alphonsine, ou la tendresse maternelle*, que l'on pouvait acheter chez le même libraire que *Bélisaire*. Cette notice fait la publicité des écrits de Genlis en ces termes :

Les œuvres de Madame de Genlis sont accueillies dans tous les pays de l'Europe avec cette approbation qu'elles méritent grâce à leurs qualités internes. Les romans qu'elle a publiés n'appartiennent pas au commun des œuvres romanesques. Le lecteur n'y trouvera pas une sentimentalité ampoulée, des tableaux voluptueux, la description des événements qui n'ont jamais eu et ne peuvent avoir lieu, et d'autres bagatelles semblables, auxquelles recourent les auteurs de ce genre de livres pour suppléer à leur manque de talent. Non ! Les romans de Madame de Genlis sont agréables à lire et contiennent de bons exemples que peuvent y puiser tout honnête homme et toute jeune fille.⁵⁰

À côté de Genlis, c'est Sophie Cottin (1770–1807) qui jouit, à la même époque, d'une grande vogue auprès du public russe. Des traductions de ses œuvres sont publiées quatorze fois entre 1805 et 1828. La traduction de son poème *La Prise de Jéricho* (1803) paraît en 1805 ; ensuite viennent des romans : *Amélie Mansfield* (1803), dont la traduction est publiée en 1810 et rééditée en 1817 ; *Malvina* (1801), qui paraît en russe en 1818 ; *Mathilde, ou Mémoires tirés de l'histoire des Croisades* (1805), traduit en 1806–1807, réédité en 1811, 1813, 1821 et 1828 ; et *Elisabeth, ou les exilés de Sibérie* (1806). La popularité de ce dernier roman s'explique en

⁴⁹ *Velissariï, sočinenie Gospoži de Genlis, perevod Zakharova* (Bélisaire, œuvre de Madame de Genlis, traduite par Zakharov) (Saint-Petersbourg : 1808) XXV–XXVI.

⁵⁰ *Velissariï, sočinenie Gospoži de Genlis* [dernière page].

grande partie par le thème russe.⁵¹ Il est traduit deux fois, en 1807 et 1808, et la deuxième traduction connaît trois éditions.

C'est encore Karamzine qui éclaire la réception de Cottin : la traduction d'*Amélie Mansfield* comporte, en guise d'épigraphe ces vers (en russe) signés de son nom :

Voulez-vous voir un serpent caché derrière une rose vermeille?
Voulez-vous haïr la vie et la mort
Et trouver l'ennemi dans votre propre cœur?
Alors aimez!... Bientôt votre dépouille sera sous la terre.
Ah, la vie de ceux qui sont sensibles ne peut être longue...

Ces vers, tirés du poème *Protée, ou les poètes indociles*,⁵² publié dans son almanach *Aglaié* (1798–1799), définissent bien la dimension hautement sentimentale du roman de Cottin. Et en 1817, le *Fils de la Patrie* constate : 'Les romans de Madame Cottin, par l'intérêt de leurs sujets, un but moral et un beau style ont mérité l'approbation générale des amateurs d'une lecture agréable'.⁵³ Il est à noter que *Claire d'Albe*, son roman peut-être le plus célèbre où Cottin traite un adultère dont la morale a dû paraître douteuse, n'a jamais été traduit en russe....

Lectures des Romans de Femmes

Des traces de lectures des romancières françaises se laissent retrouver dans différentes catégories d'égodocuments. Dans ses *Mémoires*, Catherine II elle-même parle de ses lectures de romans, et selon Anguelina Vatcheva, en y décrivant une de ses aventures amoureuses, l'impératrice transpose le premier roman de Riccoboni, *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd*.⁵⁴ Des citations en français, tirées des romans de Riccoboni, de

⁵¹ Le thème russe, présent dans *Elisabeth, ou les exilés de Sibérie*, avait en France suscité des imitations, qui à leur tour étaient encore l'objet de traductions vers le russe : d'Adélaïde-Isabelle-Jeanne Chemin (1772–?), *Le Courrier russe, ou Cornélie de Justal* (1806) fut traduit en 1808, et d'Armande Roland (1769–1852), *Alexandra, ou la Chaumière russe* (1808), en 1809.

⁵² Karamzine N.M., "Protey, ili nesoglasie poetov", in Karamzine N.M. – Dmitriev I.I., *Izbrannyye sotchinienia* 217–218.

⁵³ *Syn Otchestva* 36 (1817) 67.

⁵⁴ Vatcheva A., "Nie souditie obo mnie kak o drougikh jenchitchinakh...". *Memouary Ekateriny II i Pis'ma miss Fanni Butler g-ji Riccoboni* ("Ne me jugez point sur le commun des femmes...". *Mémoires de Catherine II et Lettres de miss Fanni*

Genlis, de Cottin, de Staël, de Souza, de Montolieu remplissent les albums et les cahiers de citations des femmes nobles russes⁵⁵ ainsi que de l'impératrice Elisabeth Alexeevna (épouse d'Alexandre Ier).⁵⁶

En 1805, une jeune diariste, Maria Bakhmeteva (dates de vie inconnues), issue d'une famille aristocratique, qui avait choisi comme épigraphe à son journal, tenu en français, une citation tirée de la *Nouvelle Héloïse*, loue avec effusion les œuvres de Genlis qu'elle lit dans l'original :

Après le déjeuner j'ai commencé par lire Madame Genlis. Mon admiration pour cette femme savante augmente de jour en jour. Quel style enchanteur ! Quelles pensées profondes ! Quels sentiments ! Elle fait beaucoup d'honneur à notre sexe. J'envie ses talents. J'aurais voulu être son écolière.⁵⁷

Mais les lectures ne sont pas que féminines. En 1820, un jeune officier, le prince Valentin Chakhovskoï (1801–1850), tient en français un journal de voyage au sud de la Russie. Selon ce journal, il lit uniquement des romans en français écrits par des femmes : *Malvina* (Cottin), *Les Vœux téméraires* (Genlis) et *Saint Clair des Isles, ou Les exilés à l'île de Barra* (1808), traduction libre par Isabelle de Montolieu du roman anglais d'Elisabeth Helme.⁵⁸ Dans le journal qu'il tient en 1823 à Moscou, Valentin dit avoir lu à ses sœurs *Amélie Mansfield* (Cottin).⁵⁹ Toutes ces œuvres sont lues en français, ce dont témoignent aussi des cahiers de citations de la femme du prince Chakhovskoï, la princesse Elisaveta Chakhovskaia.⁶⁰

Butlerd de Mme Riccoboni), *Novoïe literatournoïe obozreniie* 80 (2006) ; accessible sur l'Internet : magazines.russ.ru/nlo.

⁵⁵ *Album de la princesse Natalia Kourakina, 1807–1808*, Département des sources manuscrites du Musée historique d'État, fonds 3, vieil inventaire, n° 673 ; *Album de la princesse Zinaïda Volkonskaia, 1806–1810*, Archives d'État de littérature et d'art, fonds 172, inventaire 1, n° 1. Voir aussi : Vatsuro V.E., "Literatournyi albom v sobranii Pouchkinskogo doma (1750–1840)" (L'album littéraire dans la collection de la Maison Pouchkine. 1750–1840), *Ejegodnik roukopisnogo otdela Pouchkinskogo doma 1977* (1979) 15–23 ; Gretchanaia E., "Fonction des citations littéraires dans les albums féminins russes rédigés en français (fin du XVIII^e – début du XIX^e siècle)", in Brouard-Arends I. (éd.), *Lectrices d'Ancien régime* (Rennes : 2003) 431–439.

⁵⁶ *Album de l'impératrice Elisabeth Alexeevna, 1803–1810*, Archives d'État de Fédération de Russie, fonds 658, inventaire 1, n° 2 ; *Cahier de citations de l'impératrice Elisabeth Alexeevna, 1795–1800*, Archives d'État d'actes anciens, fonds 1278, inventaire 1, n° 452.

⁵⁷ Gretchanaia. – Viollet, "Si tu lis jamais ce journal" 179.

⁵⁸ Département des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque d'État russe, fonds 336/II, carton 63, n° 24.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* fol. 125r.

⁶⁰ *Cahier de citations de la princesse Elisaveta Chakhovskaia, 1820–1822*, Département des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque d'État russe, fonds 336/2, carton 70, n° 1.

Dans son essai *Promenade dans Moscou* (fin 1811), le poète Konstantine Batuchkov remarque, avec ironie, à propos des nombreux libraires qui vendent à l'époque des livres en français, que Mesdames de Sévigné et Genlis sont devenues 'deux catéchismes des jeunes filles', qui lisent aussi 'un tas de romans'.⁶¹ Certains ouvrages sont publiés en français par des éditeurs russes: par exemple le *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes* (Genlis) est publié en 1780 à Moscou en français et en russe (textes parallèles), et sa *Maison rustique*, publiée à Paris en 1810, paraît la même année à Saint-Petersbourg en langue originale.

Il est plus compliqué d'arriver à savoir *qui* lit les *traductions*, que nous avons vues si nombreuses, de romans de femmes, car là les témoignages de l'époque manquent. Le lecteur de traductions, généralement, demeure 'anonyme'.⁶² Ce qui est évident, c'est que les romans de femmes traduits vers le russe sont souvent lus par des critiques, qui en rendent compte dans des revues. C'est que les traductions – non seulement celles de livres de femmes, mais celles-ci aussi – rivalisent avec l'original et participent activement à la constitution de la langue littéraire russe. D'où l'attitude parfois sévère des critiques: ils relèvent des fautes de style, des tournures lourdes et peu compréhensibles en russe. Dans leur compte-rendu de la traduction de *Bélisaire* (Genlis), les éditeurs de la revue sentimentaliste *Tsvetnik* (Parterre de fleurs), Alexandre Izmaïlov et Alexandre Benitski, reprochent au traducteur, Zakharov, plusieurs imperfections qui éloignent – d'après eux – le lecteur de la langue claire et précise de l'auteure française. Ils blâment notamment le mélange de tournures russes et de calques du français, d'expressions populaires avec d'autres relevant du style élevé. Ils soulignent que 'les qualités du roman comme genre consistent essentiellement dans son style et dans l'intérêt des événements décrits'.⁶³ La critique des traductions d'ouvrages de Genlis, dans d'autres revues, met de même en évidence la beauté de l'original qui est reconnue, puisque 'les nouvelles de Madame de Genlis sont considérées, après celles de Marmontel, comme les meilleurs, écrites en langue fran-

⁶¹ Batuchkov K., *Opyty v stikhakh i proze* (Essais en vers et en prose) (Moscou: 1977) 383.

⁶² Marker G., *Publishing, Printing and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800* 236.

⁶³ *Tsvetnik, izdavaemyi A. Izmaïlovym i A. Benitskim* (Parterre de fleurs édité par A. Izmaïlov et A. Benitski), 1 (Saint-Petersbourg: 1809) 256.

çaise'.⁶⁴ En plus, cette beauté est censée provenir en grande partie du fait que c'est une femme qui écrit. Makarov, dans l'article cité, lance notamment un appel pour 'penser, agir et parler selon leurs règles': à savoir celles imposées par les femmes. Les critiques soulignent donc le décalage entre cette beauté et la langue russe souvent mal dégrossie du traducteur.⁶⁵ On fait exception pour les traductions plus élégantes de Karamzine, orientées, comme toute son œuvre, vers le goût des femmes. Ainsi, c'est l'écriture féminine qui, en grande partie, sert de repère.

Quant aux autres groupes de lecteurs non professionnels, ce sont en premier lieu des éléments paratextuels qui peuvent aider à les cerner: notamment les dédicaces et les listes de souscription. Ici, on retrouve les femmes. Pour commencer par les dédicaces, les traductions d'œuvres d'écrivaines en comportent parfois qui sont adressées à des femmes. Ainsi, celle d'*Arthur et Sophronie, ou l'Amour et le mystère* (Genlis, 1802), publiée en 1807, est dédiée par le traducteur, Yakov Lizogoub, à Elisaveta Goudovitcheva; celle de ses nouvelles, publiée en 1808 par Ivan Kroa, est dédiée à Varvara Golitsyna (née Engelhardt), nièce du prince Grigorii Potemkine, favori de Catherine II. Son drame *La veuve de Sarepta, ou l'Hospitalité récompensée* (tiré du *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes*), traduit par Ivan Rayevski, a pour dédicataire la 'mère aimable' du traducteur.

L'éditeur, lui-même auteur – sous l'anonymat – de la deuxième traduction d'*Elisabeth* (Cottin) la dédie à une dame noble, Anna Doubrovina. L'historien et homme de lettres Dmitri Bantych-Kamenski, traduisant *Mathilde*, dédie son ouvrage à sa 'sœur aimable'. *Mathilde* entre dans la liste des romans recommandés aux 'jeunes lectrices' par la revue *Blagonamerennyi* (Le Bien-pensant), de même que *Les Chevaliers du Cygne* (Genlis), et que, également d'ailleurs et pour les mêmes raisons morales, les romans d'August Lafontaine et de Walter Scott.⁶⁶

Cependant le public qui lit les traductions des romancières françaises n'est pas exclusivement féminin. Le prince Chalikov, autre disciple de Karamzine, poète et éditeur de *Damskii journal* (*Revue des dames*),

⁶⁴ *Vestnik Evropy*, 26, 5 (1806) 54 (critique comparée des traductions, par N. Karamzine et A. Tatarinov, de la nouvelle de Genlis *L'Apostasie, ou la Dévotion*, publié dans la *Nouvelle bibliothèque des romans* en 1801).

⁶⁵ *Syn Otechestva*, 34 (1816) 97–98 (critique des deux traductions de *La duchesse de La Vallière*); *Moskovskii Merkourii*, 4 (1803) 118–124 (critique de la traduction, par Piotr Domogatski, du roman *Les mères rivales, ou la Calomnie*, 1800).

⁶⁶ *Blagonamerennyi, journal izdavaemyi A. Izmailovym*, 15, supplément (1821) 5.

publie en 1815–1816 la traduction de *La duchesse de La Vallière* (Genlis), en 1816, celle de son *Histoire d'Henri IV*, dédiée à Alexandre Ier auquel est comparé le roi de France, et en 1818, les *Nouvelles nouvelles de Mme de Genlis*, qui sont la traduction de son recueil *Žuma ou la Découverte du quinquina* (1817). Dédiant ce dernier ouvrage au poète le prince Piotr Viazemskii, Chalikov, après avoir remarqué que ‘la vieillesse de la femme auteur ne refroidit nullement son pinceau’, écrit : ‘Mais vous connaissez les *originaux*, et je n’ai qu’à souhaiter que la *copie* n’affaiblisse leurs qualités’.⁶⁷ On en conclut que le fait de connaître l’original n’empêche pas de lire la traduction.

Les listes de souscripteurs sont également révélatrices. Quelques exemples : celle que contient *Nouvelles nouvelles* ne comporte que des noms nobles, y compris de l’élite de la noblesse, qui maîtrise en général le français : 61 souscripteurs, dont huit princes et trois princesses ; et au total quatorze femmes. Ce groupe tellement uni de souscripteurs est dû au statut social du traducteur Chalikov, lui-même prince, qui a fait apparemment appel à la souscription dans son propre milieu. D’autres listes de souscripteurs sont plus mélangées. Pour *Les Chevaliers du cygne* il y a 35 souscripteurs : 27 nobles, dont trois femmes, et huit hommes de condition inférieure. *Mademoiselle de La Fayette* a 71 souscripteurs, dont 51 à Moscou, huit à Pétersbourg et douze dans des villes de province. La liste mentionne 52 nobles, dont quatre femmes, douze marchands de Moscou et sept personnes de condition modeste de Pétersbourg et d’autres villes, dont une femme de province.

Un fragment de *Valérie* (Krüdener), dans deux traductions différentes, est d’abord publié, en 1804, dans les revues *Severnoi vestnik* (Messager du Nord) et *Patriote*. Pour le *Patriote*, il s’adresse ‘aux jeunes lecteurs’.⁶⁸ La traduction complète de 1807, mentionnée plus haut, effectuée par Mikhaïl Bakkarevitch, adjoint du secrétaire d’État au Conseil d’État, est dédiée par le traducteur à Sergueï Moukhanov,⁶⁹ représentant de l’élite

⁶⁷ *Noviye povesti grafini Genlis, perevel k.[niaz'] P. Chalikov* (Nouvelles nouvelles de la comtesse de Genlis, traduites par le p.[rince] P. Chalikov) (Moscou : 1818).

⁶⁸ *Patriote. Journal vospitania, izdavaemyi Vladimirom Izmailovym* (Patriote. Revue d’éducation, éditée par Vladimir Izmailov) 2, 3 (1804) 348.

⁶⁹ *Valeria, ili Pis'ma Goustava von Linara k Ernestou von G. ... Noveichii roman Baronessy von Krüdener. S frantsouzskogo na nemetskii perevedeno Millerom, a s onogo na rossiiskii M.[ikhailom] B.[akkarevitchem]* (Valérie, ou Lettres de Gustave de Linar à Ernest de G. ... Roman nouveau de la baronne de Krüdener. Traduit du français en allemand par [Georg Friedrich] Müller, et de l’allemand en russe par M.[ikhail] B.[akkarevitch]) (Moscou : 1807).

de la noblesse, ‘conseiller privé actuel, écuyer de la Cour impériale’ (de l’impératrice Maria Fedorovna), ce qui donne à supposer que cette traduction était connue de Maria Fedorovna et peut-être des autres membres de la famille impériale. La liste des souscripteurs comporte 28 personnes: 22 nobles, y compris deux princes, un comte et trois femmes. Parmi les nobles on retrouve le nom de Nikolai Karamzine.

La première édition de la traduction de *Mathilde* (Cottin) comporte une liste de 27 souscripteurs dont dix-neuf nobles, y compris deux femmes de la haute noblesse, six marchands (de Moscou, de Saint-Petersbourg et des villes provinciales) et aussi un prêtre. Les ecclésiastiques, qui maîtrisent rarement le français, constituent nombre de lecteurs des traductions russes.⁷⁰

Pour la traduction du roman d’Elisabeth Guénard (1751–1829) *Irma, ou les Malheurs d’une jeune orpheline, histoire indienne* (1800), parue en 1808–1809 à Moscou, il y a eu 64 souscripteurs: 44 à Moscou, deux à Pétersbourg, dix-huit dans les villes provinciales. Les souscripteurs de Moscou comptent 25 nobles, dont deux princes, deux princesses et une comtesse, deux ‘marchands de Moscou’, et dix-neuf personnes de condition modeste, dont une femme. Les souscripteurs de Pétersbourg sont deux marchands, dont un souscrit pour 30 exemplaires, et l’autre pour 5. En province: huit nobles, dont deux femmes, un marchand, neuf personnes de condition inférieure. Cette liste comporte au total 9 femmes. La présence des officiers subalternes est importante, mais il y a aussi un colonel. Parmi les civils figurent de hauts fonctionnaires: conseillers d’État, conseillers de cour, conseillers d’État actuels. Cette traduction est rééditée en 1819. ‘Les malheurs, retracés dans le récit d’Irma, ont droit à la compassion d’un lecteur sensible’, écrit le traducteur anonyme dans sa préface à la première édition. Cet appel à la sensibilité eut donc du succès. L’année suivante est publié un autre roman de Guénard, *La Tour infernale, ou les Aventures de Grégorio Montenegro*. (1819).

Les catalogues de bibliothèques constituent une autre source. La présence de traductions d’œuvres de Genlis et de Cottin dans la bibliothèque de l’Ermitage permet de supposer une circulation de ces textes dans la famille impériale. Le *Catalogue général des livres russes. 1801–1825* signale que de l’Ermitage proviennent des exemplaires russes des *Che-*

⁷⁰ Zaitseva A.A., “Kabinety dlia tchtenia” v Sankt-Peterbourge kontsa XVIII – nachala XIX veka 30.

valiers du Cygne (Genlis), de son *Sainclair, ou la Victime des sciences et des arts* (traduit en 1808) et de son traité *La Religion considérée comme l'unique base du bonheur et de la véritable philosophie* (traduit en 1805), ainsi que de *La Prise de Jéricho, Malvina* et *Elisabeth* de Cottin. Un exemplaire russe de *La Religion considérée comme l'unique base* de Genlis provient aussi de la bibliothèque du comte Alexandre Stroganov, à l'époque mécène et président de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts.

Quelques hommes mémorialistes, issus de la noblesse provinciale, parlent des bibliothèques de leurs parents lesquelles, au début du XIX^e siècle, privilégiaient, parmi les traductions d'ouvrages étrangers, les romans de Genlis et les drames de Kotzebue. Selon ces mémorialistes, les lecteurs de ces œuvres étaient tant des hommes que des femmes de leur famille.⁷¹

En 1813, à Pétersbourg, Vassilii Plavilchtchikov ouvre la première bibliothèque de lecture publique russe. Le premier catalogue de cette bibliothèque, qui date de 1820–1826, comporte pratiquement tous les romans 'féminins' français traduits en russe à la fin du XVIII^e – début du XIX^e siècle.⁷² Même si on ne dispose pas d'informations concernant les prêts de livres dans cette 'bibliothèque de lecture', la présence importante de ces traductions montre que ces textes deviennent un élément constitutif dans la nouvelle culture russe.

Influence

La large présence, décrite ici, au XVIII^e et durant le premier quart du XIX^e siècle, de romancières françaises en Russie – que leurs œuvres aient été choisies en fonction de leur dimension divertissante, sentimentale, ou pédagogique – est importante par rapport au rôle qu'ensuite ont pu jouer les femmes russes. En effet, la créativité féminine est généralement mise en valeur et encouragée dans la presse périodique, surtout par les adeptes de l'école sentimentaliste de Karamzine, qui mettent cette créativité en rapport direct avec les progrès de la littérature

⁷¹ Voir par ex. Dmitriev M., *Glavy iz vospominaniï o moyei jizni* (Chapitres des mémoires de ma vie) (Moscou: 1998) 52, 526; Petcherine V.S., "Zamoguilnyie zapiski" (Mémoires d'outre-tombe), in Fedossov I.A. (éd.), *Rousskoïe obchtchestvo 30 godov XIX veka* (Moscou: 1989) 149, 151.

⁷² Anastassevitch V.G., *Rospis' rossiïskim knigam dlïa tchtenia iz biblioteki V. Plavilchtchikova* (Catalogue de livres russes de la bibliothèque de lecture de V. Plavilchtchikov) (Saint-Petersbourg: 1820–1826).

russe. Les traductions russes des romancières françaises sont orientées vers un public large. Les données obtenues suggèrent qu'il inclut différentes couches sociales : des aristocrates et la petite noblesse provinciale, des fonctionnaires, hauts et petits, des marchands, des 'mechtchane' (résidents des villes, qui n'appartiennent pas aux couches sociales privilégiées, et sont proches de la petite bourgeoisie, classe qui n'est pas encore formée en Russie), des ecclésiastiques. Parmi les souscripteurs, ce sont les nobles qui prédominent et parmi les traducteurs nous voyons les écrivains issus de la noblesse, tels Karamzine ou Chalikov. La noblesse francophone russe porte ainsi l'intérêt pour les traductions – qui va donc très loin et inclut des romans de femmes qu'en France la critique n'appréciait pas forcément – et les inscrit dans la culture de l'élite. Et c'est l'élite qui assure en premier lieu, à l'époque, le développement de la littérature en Russie.

Cette évidence empirique est d'une importance capitale, car l'intérêt pour les romans de femmes y compris français, est directement lié au développement du genre romanesque en Russie. La production romanesque féminine détermine en grande partie le champ littéraire et les principales tendances de l'époque. La valorisation des romancières françaises en Russie est ainsi à mettre en rapport avec la nouvelle perspective sur le roman sentimental français que proposait récemment Margaret Cohen.⁷³ Accueilli et adopté par l'école sentimentaliste, ce roman devient plus tard le point de départ et l'objet de la transformation et / ou de la contestation dans l'œuvre des écrivains russes.

Les textes originaux et les traductions de romans de femmes, qui présentent un élément nécessaire du paysage littéraire russe, forment donc le cadre transnational à l'intérieur duquel se produisent les femmes écrivains russes. Celles-ci participent activement aux échanges littéraires internationaux entre femmes de lettres qui se développent à partir de la fin du XVIII^e siècle.⁷⁴ Et c'est par des textes rédigés en français que commence la production romanesque des femmes russes.⁷⁵ Le premier roman français est publié à Paris, en 1802, par la comtesse Natalia Golovkina (née Ismaïlova, 1769–1849). Intitulé *Eli-*

⁷³ Voir Cohen M., *The Sentimental Education of the Novel* (Princeton – New-Jersey: 1999).

⁷⁴ Voir Marsh R., "Introduction", in Marsh R. (éd.), *Gender and Russian literature: New Perspectives*, (Cambridge: 1996).

⁷⁵ Sur les romancières francophones russes voir Kelly C., *A History of Russian Women's Writing. 1820–1992* (Oxford: 1994) 54; Tosi A., "Women and Literature, Women in Literature: Female Authors of Fiction in the Early Nineteenth Century", in

*sabeth de S***, ou l'Histoire d'une Russe, publiée par une de ses compatriotes*, il s'appuie sur la tradition du roman épistolaire, tant sentimental que libertin, et son héroïne ne présente aucune spécificité nationale, même si l'auteure insiste, dans son titre, qu'il s'agit d' 'une Russe'. Il est tout de suite traduit et publié en russe, comme plus tard le roman français de la princesse Zinaïda Volkonskaïa (née Belosselskaïa; 1789–1862), *Tableau slave du cinquième siècle*, publié en 1824 à Paris, et, l'année suivante, à Saint-Petersbourg dans la traduction russe, effectuée par le prince Chalikov. Natalia Golovkina publie en 1807 à Moscou et en 1809 à Paris son deuxième roman en français, *Alphonse de Lodève*. La princesse Praskovia Golitsyna (née Chouvalova; 1767–1828) suit son exemple, en faisant paraître deux petits romans français dont l'action se passe à Paris et dans les environs: *Mélise*, publiée en 1813 à Paris et l'année suivante à Pétersbourg, et *Lettres du Duc de P****, publié en 1816 à Pétersbourg et Brunswick. Au début des années 1800, une jeune écrivaine, Maria Izvekova (1789–1830), publie des romans sentimentaux russes sur le modèle européen. Leur action se passe pour la plupart en France, tandis que le discours romanesque russe de cette auteure s'appuie sur les traductions, en premier lieu des romans de femmes. La composante transnationale est ainsi constante dans la production féminine russe.

Cette présence littéraire féminine favorisera plus tard, dans les années 1830, l'entrée sur la scène de plusieurs romancières russes.⁷⁶ Elle contribuera également à la réception enthousiaste des œuvres et des traductions russes de George Sand, qui débute en 1833 par celle de son roman *Indiana*.

Rosslyn W. – Tosi A. (éds.), *Women in Russian Culture and Society, 1700–1825* (Basingstoke: 2007) 39–62.

⁷⁶ Voir Savkina I., *Provintsialki rousskoï literatoury. Jenskaia prosa 1830–1840* (Les provinciales de la littérature russes. La prose des femmes des années 1830–1840) (Wilmshorst: 1998).

Bibliographie

- ANASTASSEVITCH V.G., *Rospis' rossijskim knigam dlja tchtenia iz biblioteki V. Plavilchtchikova* (Catalogue de livres russes de la bibliothèque de lecture de V. Plavilchtchikov), en 3 parties (Saint-Petersbourg: 1820–1826).
- BARENBAUM I.E., “Frantsouzskaja perevodnaia khoudojestvennaia literatoura v Rossii (Traductions des œuvres littéraires françaises en Russie)”, in Zaitseva A.A. (éd.), *Kniga v Rossii XVII – nachala XIX veka* (Leningrad: 1989) 139–145.
- BATUCHKOV K., *Opyty v stikhakh i proze* (Essais en vers et en prose) (Moscou: 1977).
- BRUNOT F., *Histoire de la langue française des origines à nos jours*. T. VIII. *Le français hors de France au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 1934) 489–529.
- CAVALLO G. – CHARTIER R. (éds.), *Histoire de la lecture dans le monde occidental* (Paris: 2001).
- COHEN M., *The Sentimental Education of the Novel* (Princeton – New-Jersey: 1999).
- FOMENKO I.Y. (ed.), *Svodnyi katalog russkoj knigi. 1801–1825* (Catalogue général des livres russes, 1801–1825), 2 vol. (Moscou: 2000, 2007).
- GÉNEVRAY F., *George Sand et ses contemporains russes: audience, échos, réécritures* (Paris: 2000).
- GRETCHANAIA E., “Fonction des citations littéraires dans les albums féminins russes rédigés en français (fin du XVIII^e – début du XIX^e siècle)”, in Brouard-Arends I. (éd.), *Lectrices d’Ancien régime* (Rennes: 2003) 431–439.
- GRETCHANAIA E. – VIOLLET C. (éds.), *‘Si tu lis jamais ce journal’: diaristes russes francophones. 1780–1854* (Paris: 2008).
- HAMMARBERG G., “The Feminine Chronotope and Sentimentalist Canon Formation”, in Cross A.G. – Smith G.S. (éds.), *Literature, Lives and Legality in Catherine’s Russia* (Nottingham, 1994) 103–120.
- HAUMANT É., *La culture française en Russie (1700–1900)* (Paris: 1913).
- HELDT B., *Terrible Perfection. Women and Russian Literature* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: 1987).
- HOOGENBOOM H., “Catherine the Great and her several Memoirs”, in Hoogenboom H. – Cruse M., *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great. A new translation* (New York: 2006) ix–lxix.
- IVASK U.G., *Tchastnyie biblioteki v Rossii* (Bibliothèques privées en Russie) (Saint-Petersbourg: 1912).
- KAFANOVA O.B. – SOKOLOVA M.V., *George Sand v Rossii: Bibliografija russkikh perevodov i kritičeskoj literatoury na russkom yazyke. 1832–1900* (George Sand en Russie: Bibliographie des traductions et des jugements critiques russes. 1832–1900) (Moscou: 2005).
- , *George Sand i rousskaia literatoura XIX veka. 1830–1860. Mify i realnost’* (George Sand et la littérature russe du XIX^e siècle. 1830–1860. Mythes et réalités) (Tomsk: 1998).
- , “Bibliografija perevodov N.M. Karamzina v *Vestnike Evropy*. 1802–1803” (Bibliographie des traductions de N.M. Karamzine dans le *Messenger de l’Europe*. 1802–1803), *XVIII vek* 17 (1991) 249–283.
- , “Bibliografija perevodov N.M. Karamzina. 1783–1800” (Bibliographie des traductions de N.M. Karamzine. 1783–1800), *XVIII vek* 16 (1989) 320–322.
- KARAMZINE N.M., *Izbrannye stat’i i pis’ma* (Moscou: 1982), 101–103.
- KELLY C., *A History of Russian Women’s Writing. 1820–1992* (Oxford: 1994).
- KONDAKOV I.P. (ed.), *Svodnyi katalog russkikh knig grajdanskoj pečhati XVIII veka (1708–1800)* (Catalogue général des livres imprimés en langue russe au XVIII^e siècle. 1708–1800), 5 vol. et *Supplément* (Moscou: 1962–1975).
- KOPANIEV N.A., *Frantsouzskaja kniga i rousskaia kouloura v seredine XVIII veka* (Le livre français et la culture russe au milieu du XVIII^e siècle) (Leningrad: 1988).

- LEDKOVSKY M. – ROSENTHAL Ch. – ZIRIN M. (éds.), *Dictionary of Russian Women Writers* (Westport – London: 1994).
- LEVIN Y.D. (éd.), *Istoria rousskoï perevodnoï khoudojestvennoï literatoury. Drevniaia Rouss'. XVIII vek* (Histoire de la traduction d'œuvres littéraires en Russie. Ancienne Russie. XVIII^e siècle) 1 (Saint-Petersbourg: 1993).
- LOTMAN Y.M., *Bessedy o rousskoï koulture. Byt i traditsii rousskogo dvorianstva. XVIII – natchalo XIX veka* (Entretiens sur la culture russe. Vie quotidienne et traditions de la noblesse russe. XVIII – début du XIX^e siècle) (Saint-Petersbourg: 1997).
- LÜBENOW M., *Französische Kultur in Russland. Entwicklungslinien in Geschichte und Literatur* (Cologne – Weimar – Vienne: 2002).
- MARKER G., *Publishing, Printing and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800* (Princeton: 1985).
- MARSH R. (ed.), *Gender and Russian literature: New Perspectives* (Cambridge: 1996).
- MARTYNOV N.F., “Provintsialnyie knigoluby XVIII veka” (Amateurs de livres en province au XVIII^e siècle), in Zaïtseva A.A. (ed.), *Rousskie biblioteki i tchastnyie knižnyie sobrania XVI–XIX vekov* (Leningrad: 1979) 125–140.
- MOROZOV I., KOUTCHEROV A., “Iz neizdannogo literatournogo nasledia Bolotova” (Écrits inédits de Bolotov), in *Literatournoie nasledstvo 9–10* (Moscou: 1933) 191–221.
- PLAGNOL-DIÉVAL M.-E., *Bibliographie des écrivains français. Madame de Genlis* (Paris – Rome: 1996).
- POUSSOU J.P. – MÉZIN A. – PERRET-GENTIL Y. (éds.), *L'Influence française en Russie au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 2004).
- PUSHKAREVA N., *Women in History: from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century* (New-York: 1997).
- RJEOUTSKI V., “La langue française en Russie au siècle des Lumières: éléments pour une histoire sociale”, in Haskins Gonthier U. – Sandrier A. (éds.), *Multilinguisme et multiculturalité dans l'Europe des Lumières. Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Enlightenment Europe. Actes du séminaire international des jeunes dix-huitièmistes. 2004* (Paris: 2007) 101–125.
- ROSSLYN W., “Feats of Agreeable Usefulness: Translations by Russian Women. 1763–1825”, in Göpfert F. (éd.), *FrauenLiteraturGeschichte. Texte und Materialien zur russischen Frauenliteratur* 13 (Fichtenwalde: 2000).
- , *Anna Bunina (1774–1829) and the Origins of Women's Poetry in Russia* (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: 1997).
- SAVKINA I., *Provintsialki rousskoï literatoury. Ženskaia prosa 1830–1840* (Les provinciales de la littérature russes. La prose des femmes des années 1830–1840) (Wilhelmshorst: 1998).
- TOSI A., “Women and Literature, Women in Literature: Female Authors of Fiction in the Early Nineteenth Century”, in Rosslyn W. – Tosi A. (éds.), *Women in Russian Culture and Society, 1700–1820* (Basingstoke: 2007) 39–62.
- VATCHEVA A., “‘Nie souditie obo mnie kak o drougikh jenchitchinakh...’. Memouary Ekateriny II i Pis'ma miss Fanni Butler g-ji Riccoboni” (“Ne me jugez point sur le commun des femmes...”. Mémoires de Catherine II et *Lettres de miss Fanni Butlerd* de Mme Riccoboni), *Novoie literatournoie obozreniie* 80 (2006); accessible sur l'Internet: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo>.
- VATSURO V.E., “Literatournyi album v sobranii Pouchkinskogo doma (1750–1840)” (L'album littéraire dans la collection de la Maison Pouchkine. 1750–1840), in *Ejegyodnik roukopisnogo otdela Pouchkinskogo doma, 1977* (Leningrad: 1979) 15–23.
- VINOGRADOV V.V., *Otcherki po istorii rousskogo literatournogo yazyka XVII–XIX vekov* (Essais sur l'histoire de la langue littéraire russe des XVII^e–XIX^e siècles) (Moscou: 1982).
- VOWLES J., “The ‘Feminisation’ of Russian Literature: Women, Language and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Russia”, in Clyman T.W. – Greene D. (éds.), *Women Writers in Russian Literature* (Westport – London: 1994) 35–60.

ZABOROV P.R., “Germaine de Staël i rousskaia literatoura pervoy treti XIX veka” (Germaine de Staël et la littérature russe du premier tiers du XIX^e siècle), in *Rannie romanticheskie veiania* (Leningrad: 1972) 168–221.

ZAÏTSEVA A.A. (éd.), *Kniga v Rossii v epokhu Prosvechtchenia* (Livre en Russie au siècle des Lumières) (Leningrad: 1988).

— (ed.), *Kniga v Rossii. XVI – seredina XIX veka* (Livre en Russie. XVI – milieu du XIX^e siècle) (Leningrad: 1987).

—, “Kabinety dlia tchtenia” v Sankt-Peterbourge kontsa XVIII – natchala XIX veka” (“Cabinets de lecture” à Saint-Pétersbourg à la fin du XVIII^e – début du XIX^e siècle), in Zaitseva A.A. (ed.), *Rousskie biblioteki i tchastnyie knijnyie sobrania XVI–XIX vekov* (Leningrad: 1979) 29–44.

INDEX NOMINUM

- Abbas I (Shah of Safavid Empire) 269
 Agostinho, José 94
 Alewyn, Geertruid 179 n. 38
 Alexander I (Emperor of Russia) 350, 364, 367
 Alighieri, Dante 298
 Alorna, Leonor de Almeida
 Portugal, Countess of
 Oeynhausen, Marquise of 12, 93, 98–106, 110
 Alvastra, Peter of 43
 Amar, Josefa 331, 335, 338–339, 341–342
 Amya, Anna 181 n. 41
 Amya, Harmannus 180–181
 Andrade e Castro, Fernando Martins
 Freire de 99
 Angennes, Julie duchesse de Montausier d' 203
 Antonides van der Goes, Joannes 172 n. 27, 174 n. 29, 175–178, 184 n. 49
 Andersen, Bjørn 62
 Andreini, Isabella 124
 Anne (Queen of England) 74, 78, 86, 90–91
 Apolda, Dietrich of 41
 Aprosio, Angelico 303 n. 56, 304 nn. 61–62, 305 n. 64
 Archer, John Michael 268
 Aristotle 59, 121, 129–130, 140
 Astell, Mary 12, 88–91
 Aubigné, Théodore Agrippa d' 203
 Aubigné, Arthémise d' 203
 Augustine, Saint 130–131
 Aulnoy, Marie-Catherine d' 354
 Aura Soltana ('Tartar girl') 15–16, 18, 258–259, 263–266, 268, 272, 276–277
 Aywières, Lutgard of 31–33, 37

 Baculard d'Arnaud, François de 351
 Bakhmeteva, Maria 364
 Bakkarevitch, Mikhail 367
 Balsemão, Catarina, Vicomtesse of 93
 Bantych-Kamenski, Dmitri 366
 Barnsteen, Maria 179 n. 39
 Batuchkov, Konstantine 365
 Baratotti, Galerana; *see* Tarabotti, Arcangela
 Barbier, Marie-Anne 245
 Barbosa du Bocage, Manuel Maria 94, 95 n. 8
 Barking, Constance of 25
 Barking, Mary of 25
 Basedow, Johann Bernhard 314
 Bassano, Baptista 76
 Beaumont, Jeanne-Marie Leprince de; *see also* Le Prince de Beaumont, Marie-Jeanne 16, 309, 311–314, 320, 323, 334, 352, 360
 Bedford, Lucy, Countess of 74–75
 Behn, Aphra 85–86
 Benitski, Alexandre 365
 Benouville, Madame de 354–355
 Benserade, Isaac de 203
 Bernard, Catherine 15, 246
 Berquin, Arnaud 319
 Beths, Neeltje 187
 Bijns, Anna 185
 Bille, Beate 63
 Bingen, Hildegard of 10, 27–29, 47, 83
 Bingre, Francisco Joaquim 93, 95, 98, 106
 Bjørn, Jakob 53, 55, 61–63, 70
 Blacu, Joan (I) 179
 Blacu, Joan (II) 179 n. 38
 Blacu, Katharina 179 n. 39
 Blacu, Louize 179
 Blacu, Pieter 179 n. 38
 Blake, Agustín 330
 Blasius, Joan 174 n. 29
 Bokenham, Osbern 39 n. 64, 40–42
 Bolotov, Andrei 351, 354
 Bonaventura, Saint 23 n. 1
 Borges de Barros, Domingos 106
 Bormans, Suzanna 171–172, 174 n. 29, 175, 186
 Bossuet, Jacques-Bénigne 205
 Boué, Marie-Elisabeth; *see* La Fite, Marie-Elisabeth de
 Bournon-Malarme, Charlotte de 355
 Brabant, Hadewijch of 25

- Bradstreet, Anne 84, 186 n. 53
 Brahe, Tycho 63
 Bretel de Grémonville, Nicolas; *see*
 Grémonville, Nicolas Bretel de
 Breyner, Teresa de Mello 98, 106
 Briantchaninov, Afanassii 351
 Brinon, Madame de 205
 Brohon, Jacqueline-Aimée 355
 Bruin, Femmetje de 187
 Brutus, Lucius Junius 248
 Buitendoor, Nicolaas 163 n. 2
 Burney, Fanny 311, 322–324, 337 n. 18

 Calages, Marie de Pech de 15, 235
 n. 1, 237–239, 241–242
 Caldas Barbosa, Domingos 98–99
 Caminer Turra, Elisabetta 334
 Campiglia, Maddalena 13, 15, 19, 80,
 115–121, 123–132
 Canjoncle, Jan de 174 n. 29
 Canjoncle, Sara de (I) 163 n. 2
 Canjoncle, Sara de (II) 174 n. 29
 Caso, Catalina 335
 Catherine II (Empress of Russia) 347,
 352 n. 24, 363, 366
 Cantimpré, Thomas of 24, 28, 30–31, 33
 Carpi, Johannes de Plano 266–267
 Cate, Hendrik ten 187 n. 56
 Cate, Lambert ten 187 n. 56
 Cats, Jacob Cary, Lady Elizabeth 183,
 184 n. 47
 Caumont de La Force, Charlotte-Rose
 de 353–354
 Centlivre, Susannah 186 n. 53
 Cavendish, Charles 75
 Cavendish, Margaret, Duchess of
 Newcastle 74–75, 80, 84
 Chakhovskaia, Elisaveta 364
 Chakhovskoi, Valentin 364
 Chalikov, Piotr 366–367, 370–371
 Charles I (King of England) 269
 Chemin, Adélaïde-Isabelle-Jeanne 363
 n. 51
 Cheremetev, famille 350 n. 15
 Christina (Queen of Sweden) 75, 83, 240
 Christina Mirabilis (or the Astonishing)
 23 n. 1, 31, 32, 34
 Christina of Saint-Trond; *see* Christina
 Mirabilis
 Chudleigh, Lady Mary Lee 90
 Clairvaux, Bernard of 28, 35
 Claudian 166–167
 Clermont-Galerande, Renée de 294,
 299

 Clifford, Margaret (Russell), Countess of
 Cumberland 76, 79
 Coignard, Gabrielle de 236 n. 2
 Colisson (first name unknown)
 294–302
 Colonna, Vittoria 119
 Columbus, Christopher 236–237,
 242–243
 Colzè, Dionisio 117
 Corbie, Colette of 34
 Corneille, Pierre 244–245, 251
 Correia de Magalhães, Maria do
 Carmo 94
 Costa e Silva, José Maria da 94
 Cottin, Sophie 362
 Cruz e Silva, António Dinis da 98
 Cunha, José Anastácio da 99

 Dacier, Anne Lefèvre 6, 236 n. 2,
 240
 Dangeau, Madame de 202 n. 2, 206,
 217, 228
 Demidov, Alexei 350
 Denny, Lord Edward 75
 Des Hameaux, Anne 292
 Deshoulières, Antoinette 240
 Desjardins, Marie-Catherine (Madame
 de Villegieu) 245
 Desmarest, Henry 249 n. 15
 Desprat, Jean 204
 Digne, Douceline of 25, 34
 Digne, Hugh of 34
 Disibodenberg, Gottfried of 30
 Dmitriev, Mikhail 369 n. 71
 Domingos Caldas, Barbosa; *see also*
 Caldas 98–99
 Domogatski, Piotr 366 n. 65
 Dorsten, Joan van 179
 Doubrovina, Anna 366
 Drake, James 86
 Drake, Judith 12, 82 n. 26, 86
 Du Bartas, Guillaume 239 n. 6
 Du Bellay, Joachim 236
 Du Boccage, Anne-Marie 15,
 236–237, 239–245
 Du Châtelet, Emilie 6, 240, 334, 341
 Ducray-Duminil, François-
 Guillaume 359

 Ebner, Margaret 37
 Echternach, Theodor of 30
 Edward VI (King of England) 261,
 265
 Efrosimova, Matrona 357

- Ekbert (Elizabeth of Schönau's brother) 29
 Elisabeth (Princess of Bohemia) 75, 81–83, 85
 Elisabeth Alexeevna (Empress of Russia) 364
 Elizabeth I (Queen of England) 16, 73
 Elizabeth of Hungary 24, 28, 38–40, 42–43, 47
 Elizabeth/Isabel (Queen of Portugal) 43
 Emine, Nikolai 357
 L'Enclos, Ninon de 203
 Engelbrecht, Suzanne 174
 Épinay, Louise d' 312 n. 13, 334, 341, 356

 Fauques, Marianne-Agnès de 354–355
 Feijoo, Benito Jerónimo 338
 Feliciano de Castilho, António 106–107, 109
 Fénelon, François de Salignac de La Mothe- 85, 211
 Ferraz de Campos, Joaquim Severino 94
 Fielding, Henry 357
 Filinto, Elísio 98
 Fiubet, Marguerite de 292
 Fletcher, Giles 267
 Floreffé, Hugh of 33
 Fontaines, Marie-Louise-Charlotte de 353
 Fonte, Moderata 13–15, 80, 135–136, 138–141, 144–145, 153–159
 Fontenelle, Bernard de 86, 322
 Forjaz de Lencastre, Joana Isabel 99
 Fourqueux, Madame de 354–355
 Frederik II (King of Denmark) 56, 63, 68 n. 25
 Foligno, Angela of 25
 Fuerte Híjar, Marchioness of 331
 Fulk, Bishop of Toulouse 31

 Galerande, Renée de Clermont; *see* Clermont-Galerande, Renée de
 Gálvez, María Rosa 331, 343
 Gama, Basílio da 99
 Gandersheim, Adelheid of 28
 Gandersheim, Hroswitha of 25, 83
 Garrett, Almeida 106
 Geerkens, Joan 179 n. 38
 Gembloux, Guibert of 30
 Genlis, Stéphanie-Félicité de 309, 311, 318–323, 358–362, 364–369

 Giubet, Marguerite de; *see* Fiubet, Marguerite de
 Glapion, Madame de 204 n. 6, 215 n. 41, 219, 221, 228
 Godoy, Manuel 332
 Goens, Rijklof Michaël van 313 n. 14, 323
 Goes, Joannes Antonides van der; *see* Antonides van der Goes, Joannes
 Golden Ring, Margaret of the 38
 Golitsyna, Praskovia 371
 Golitsyna, Varvara 366
 Golovkina, Natalia 370–371
 Gomez, Madeleine-Angélique de 356
 Goudovitcheva, Elisaveta 366
 Gonzaga, Curzio 127
 Gregory the Great 35
 Graffigny, Françoise de 241
 Grémonville, Nicolas Bretel de 292–293
 Gretch, Nikolai 361
 Guénard, Elisabeth 368
 Guyon, Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Lamothe 211, 351

 Habib, Imtiaz 270
 Hackeborn, Gertrude of 35
 Hackeborn, Mechtilde of 24–25, 35
 Hakluyt, Richard 260–261, 264–267, 276–277
 Halle, Heinrich of 36
 Harcourt, Agnes of 25
 Hartsingh, Carel 181 n. 41
 Hastings, Lady Elizabeth 84
 Heisterbach, Cæsarius of 41
 Hek, Helena van der 179
 Helfta, Gertrud the Great of 25, 28, 35–37
 Hellie, Richard 265, 268
 Helme, Elisabeth 364
 Hendricks, Margo 259, 263 n. 23
 Herculano, Alexandre 106
 Herder, Johann Gottfried von 6, 52
 Hickey y Pellizzoni, Margarita 331, 335, 343
 Hilton, Walter 23–24
 Homer 236 n. 2, 238, 249
 Hoofman, Elisabeth 177–178
 Hooft, Pieter Cornelisz 167
 Hoogstraten, David van 176–178
 Horace, Q. Horatius Flaccus 105
 Horder 62
 Hore, María Gertrudis 331, 343
 Hugh of Saint-Victor 35
 Huy, Yvette of 33

- Insmā de Bruyn, Anna 187
 Ivan IV ("the Terrible", Emperor of Russia) 264, 362
 Izmailov, Alexandre 361, 365
 Izmailov, Vladimir 367 n. 68
 Izvekova, Maria 371

 Jaen, Alfonso of 43
 James I (King of England) 74, 269
 James of Vitry 24, 28, 30–31, 34, 39, 43
 Janssens, Anthony 184 n. 48
 Jenkinson, Anthony 258, 261–264, 268, 272, 276–277
 John XXII (Pope, Jacques Duèze) 34
 Johnson, Elizabeth 86
 Johnson, Samuel 17, 332, 335, 337 n. 18
 Jovellanos, Josefa 331
 Joyes, Inés 17, 328–333, 335–343
 Joyes, Patricio 329

 Kapnist, Vassilii 351
 Karamzine, Nikolai 17, 351, 359, 361, 366, 368–370
 Kate, Neeltje ten; *see* Beths, Neeltje
 Kazadaev, Alexandre 350 n. 15
 Keere, Geertruid van der 169 n. 24
 Kempe, Margery 23, 25–26, 28, 33, 38, 43, 45–47
 Kharlamov, Evstignei 353
 Kizzingen, Sophie of 28
 Koolaert, Pieter 177
 Koppenol, Abraham van 174
 Kopyn, Sara 187
 Koulitchkine, Vassilii 358
 Kourakina, Natalia 364 n. 55
 Kotzebue, August von 359, 369
 Krabbe, Anne 11, 51, 53–70
 Kroa, Ivan 366
 Krüdener, Varvara-Juliana de 359, 367, 367 n. 69

 La Barre, François Poullain de 85
 La Beaumelle, Laurent, Angliviel de 206–207, 212 n. 29
 La Bruyère, Jean de 231
 La Cerda, Cayetana de; *see also* Lalaing 334–335
 La Croix, Pieter de 173
 La Fite, Elise de 311, 315–321
 La Fite, Jean-Daniel de 310
 La Fite, Marie-Elisabeth de 16, 309, 311
 Lafontaine, August 359, 366

 Lalaing, Countess of 331, 334
 Lambert, Anne-Thérèse Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de 309, 334, 341, 344, 352, 354–355
 Languet de Gergy, Jean-Joseph 211
 Lanyer, Aemilia 12, 76–80, 88–89
 Lanyer, Alfonso 76
 La Roche, Sophie von 311, 322, 357
 Lausanne, John of 33
 Lavallée, Theophile 207, 212 n. 29
 Leprince de Beaumont, Marie-Jeanne 16, 309, 311–314, 320, 323, 334, 352, 360
 Lescailje, Aletta 168
 Lescailje, Barbara 170–173
 Lescailje, Katharina 14, 163, 166, 168, 171, 173, 179
 Lescaille, Jacob 168, 179
 Le Valois de Villette, Benjamin 203
 Levesque, Louise 354
 Leylye (a Persian woman) 270
 Lewis, Ida of 33
 Linköping, Matthias of 43, 45
 Liria, Duchess of 331
 Lizogoub, Yakov 366
 Loredano, Giovan Francesco 303
 Louis IX (King of France) 34, 42
 Louis XIV (King of France) 14, 204–205
 Louvain, Ida of 33
 Lubert, Marguerite de 354
 Luc, Jean-André de 311
 Lully, Jean-Baptiste 249 n. 15
 Lupi, Isabella Pallavicino 120, 126

 Magdeburg, Mechtild of 35–36
 Maine, duc du 216–217
 Maintenon, Madame de 201–202, 204–229, 231
 Makarov, Piotr 360–361, 366
 Makin, Bathsua 12, 75, 82–84, 88
 Mander, Karel van 184 n. 47
 Manique, Pina 94
 Maria Fedorovna (Empress of Russia) 358, 368
 Marienwerder, Johannes of 45 n. 94
 Marie-Thérèse (Queen of France) 237–238
 Marinelli, Lucrecia 80
 Marmontel, Jean-François 350–351, 357, 362, 365
 Mary I (Queen of England) 261
 Matharel, Louis 283, 286, 296, 298, 301–302
 Mazarin, Jules 296–298

- Mazeik, Paschyna van 187
 Meersch, Katarina van 187
 Mehmed III (Sultan of Ottoman Empire) 262
 Mello Breyner, Teresa de; *see also* Breyner 98, 106
 Ménage, Gilles 203
 Méré, Georges Brossin, Marquis de 203
 Michelet, Jules 206
 Milan, James of 23 n. 1
 Milly, Mlle de 355
 Milton, John 267 n. 38
 Montau, Dorothea of 45
 Montagu, Elizabeth (Robinson) 84
 Montagu, Lady; *see* Wortley, Mary
 Montchevreuil, marquis de 202 n. 2, 219
 Montespan, marquis de 204–205
 Montijo, Countess of 331
 Montolieu, Isabelle de 359, 364
 Mortemart, Françoise-Athénais de 204
 Morton, Margaret B. Graham 264
 Moukhanov, Sergueï 367
 Mouraviev, Mikhaïl 350 n. 15
 Mount-Cornillon, Juliana of 33
 Müller, Georg Friedrich 367 n. 69
 Muñoz, Ana 334
 Murad III (Sultan of Ottoman Empire) 262

 Napea, Osep 264
 Naqd Ali Beg 270
 Naudé, Gabriel 294 n. 35, 296–299, 302
 Navarre, Isabelle of 42
 Nazareth, Beatrice of 25, 33, 37
 Neck, Eva van 179 n. 38
 Neville, Cecile 24
 Nezam-Mafi, Mohammad 270
 Nichols, William 90
 Nispen, Maria van 177 n. 33
 Nivelles, Ida of 33
 Nivelles, John of 32 n. 29
 Noailles, duc de 202 n. 2, 214, 230 n. 97
 Nördlingen, Henry of 37
 Norris, John 88
 Norwich, Julian of 46

 Oberweimar, Lukarde of 34, 45 n. 94
 Oddoni, Guglielmo 290 n. 18
 Oeynhausens, Countess of, *see* Alorna, Leonor de Almeida

 Oignies, Marie of 23–24, 27–28, 31–32, 38, 43–44, 47
 Oingt, Marguerite of 25
 Olivi, Peter John 34
 Ornacieux, Beatrix of 25
 Osuna, Duchess of 331, 337
 Ovid 177 n. 34, 238

 Paauw, Anna 186–188
 Paul I (Emperor of Russia) 358
 Pell, John 75, 82
 Pembroke, Mary, Countess of 11, 74–75, 84
 Petcherine, Vladimir 369 n. 71
 Peter I ('the Great', Emperor of Russia) 347
 Petrarch, Francesco 127
 Phillips, Edward 85
 Phillips, Katherine 84, 86, 186 n. 54
 Pimentel, Josefa, Duchess of Osuna and Countess of Benavente 337
 Pizan, Christine de 75, 135
 Playviltchikov, Vassiliï 369
 Plechtcheeva, Anastassia 360
 Plechtcheeva, Natalia 358
 Pluimer, Joan 173, 176, 178
 Pombal, Marquis of 104
 Pombeiro, Count of 94
 Pope, Alexander 105
 Porcelet, Felipa 25
 Porete, Marguerite 25
 Possolo da Costa, Francisca de Paula 12, 93–94, 100, 105–107
 Possollo, Nicolau 94
 Potemkine, Grigorii 366
 Powell, Thomas 270
 Prémontré, Rycwer of 32 n. 32
 Principal Botelho; *see also* Domingos Caldas 99
 Priklonskii, Vassiliï 354
 Purcell, Henry 249
 Purchas, Samuel Racine, Jean 267

 Quintanilha, José Tomás da Silva Costa 94

 Radcliffe, Ann 358 n. 39
 Rank, Dirk 163 n. 2
 Rava, Agostino 118
 Rayevski, Ivan 366
 Reessen, Gerard 169 n. 24
 Ribeiro dos Santos, António 98
 Riccoboni, Marie-Jeanne 356–358, 363

- Richardson, Samuel 332, 357
 Río, Antonia 335
 Rivreulle, Oda of 32 n. 32
 Robert, Marie-Anne 355
 Roland, Armande 363 n. 51
 Rolle, Richard 23 n. 1
 Romero, María Rosario 334
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 351
 Rovere, Vittoria della 291, 292 n. 26
 Rubruquis (also Rubruck), William de 267
 Ruiz de Larrea, Francisca 331, 339

 Safiye (Ottoman queen mother, 'valide sultan') 262
 Saint-Balmon, Alberte-Barbe de 236 n. 4
 Saint-Géran, Madame de 207
 Sainctonge, Louise-Geneviève de 236 n. 2, 249–251
 Saint Clare 25
 Saint Disibod, Volmar of 27–28, 30
 Saint Martin, Eve of 33
 Saint-Simon, Louis de Rouvroy, duc de 206, 219
 Sancroft, William 88
 Sand, George 348, 371
 Sappho 84, 94, 166, 169
 Scaliger, Julius Caesar 166
 Scarron, Paul 203–204
 Schaap, Reinier 179 n. 38
 Schelling, Juliana van der 177 n. 34
 Scheppach, Elsbeth of 37
 Schönauf, Elizabeth of 27–28, 38 n. 58, 83
 Schönauf, Hildelin of 29
 Schummel, Johann Gottlieb 314
 Schurman, Anna Maria von 75, 82–83
 Scott, Sarah (Robinson) 84, 91
 Scott, Walter 366
 Scudéry, Georges de 237 n. 5
 Scudéry, Madeleine de 203, 223, 227, 238–238
 Smedo, Belchior Curvo 94, 106
 Sévigné, Marie de Rabutin-Chantal de 202, 205, 212, 365
 Silva Alvarenga, Manuel Inácio 99
 Singer, Elizabeth 86
 Semiramis 239
 Senten, Elizabeth 186 n. 54
 Shakespeare, William 81, 268, 273, 277

 Sherley, Robert 258, 269–271
 Sherley, Teresa Sampsonia 16, 258–259, 269–272, 276
 Skänninge, Peter of 43
 Sophia of Minsk (Queen of Denmark) 273
 Sophie of Mecklenburg (Queen of Denmark) 63, 68
 Souza, Adélaïde de 359
 Southwell, Robert 77
 Spaalbeck, Elizabeth of 23 n. 1
 Speght, Rachel 73, 75, 78, 88
 Sponheim, Jutta of 28
 Sprint, John 90
 Stade, Richardis von 28
 Staël, Anne-Louise-Germaine de 348, 360, 364
 Statius 166–167
 Stigsdatter, Margaretha 62
 Stommeln, Christina of 32 n. 29
 Stroganov, Alexandre 369
 Suleyman ('the Magnificent', also Solyman, Sultan of Ottoman Empire) 262
 Suso, Henry 37
 Svend (King of Denmark) 62
 Sweden, Birgitta of 24, 28, 43–44, 47
 Swetnam, Joseph 73
 Syreichtchikov, Semen 351 n. 20

 Tarabotti, Arcangela 16, 283–307
 Tarquinius II (King of Rome) 247
 Tahmasp (Shah of Safavid Empire) 261
 Tasso, Torquato 13, 116, 117 n. 7, 118, 122–123
 Tatarinov, Alexandre 366 n. 64
 Tauler, John 37
 Tchirikova, Ekaterina 351
 Tencin, Claudine-Alexandrine de 356
 Thomas, Antoine-Léonard 341
 Töess, Elizabeth of 39
 Tolentino, Nicolau 98–99
 Tomasin, wife of Thomas Powell 270
 Torelli, Barbara 120
 Torres, Domingos Maximiano 98
 Torres de Sequeira, Belchior Curvo de Smedo 94
 Townsend, Joseph 330
 Tumenev, Vassiliï 357

 Ursins, Princesse des 201, 206, 213, 228, 230

- Valdemar the Great (King of Denmark) 68
 Vaughan, Henry 77
 Vedel, Anders Sørensen 56, 63–64, 70
 Veliacheva-Volyntseva, Anna 356
 Veer, Cornelia van der 171–173, 186–187
 Vere, Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford 41
 Virgil, Publius Vergilius Maro 173
 Viazemskii, Piotr 367
 Vimieiro, Teresa, Countess of 93–94, 98, 104
 Visscher, Anna Roemersdochter 185
 Vlaming, Pieter 188
 Vogelaer, Catharina 181 n. 41
 Volkonskaia, Zinaïda 371
 Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet de 236, 242–243, 336, 350–351
 Vondel, Joost van den 167–168
 Voragine, James of 39–43
 Vorontsov, famille 350 n. 15
 Weisse, Christian Felix 314, 319 n. 34
 Wellekens, Jan 188
 Wiebouts, Maria 174 n. 29
 With, Henriëtte 188 n. 58
 With, Katharina 186 n. 54, 187–188
 Wroth, Lady Mary 16, 75, 257–259, 267–269, 271–273, 276–277
 Wollstonecraft, Mary 334, 337 n. 18, 338–339, 344
 Wortley, Mary 186 n. 53
 Wreede, Matthias de 170–172
 York, Cecily of 24
 Yeltchaninov, Boris 357
 Ypres, Margaret of 31
 Zakharov, Ivan 362, 365
 Zon, Willem van 179–180, 189